The Stream Invents A Smile

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WRITING BY STUDENTS & TEACHERS
IN THE SCHOOLS OF MONTANA
1979-80

Montana Arts Council
Poets & Writers in Schools Program

LEWIS & CLARK LIBRARY
120 LAST CHANCE MALL
HELENA, MONTANA 59601

LAW
DAY

DEDICATION

This book is affectionately dedicated to Leonard Randolph, without whose vision the Poets & Writers in Schools program would never have come to be.

WAR

Lying by the remains of an old village
A boy,
and his younger brother
sit hopelessly waiting

The child cries in hunger
His stomach,
reeks in pain
His eyes,
filled with tears and sadness

Holes dug by bombs seem to lead to the
pits of hell
Smoke rises from the holes,
Smoke of hate,
Smoke of sadness

Joy leaves the earth
after this war

This is war,
This is our world.

Aris George, Jr.
Hingham High
Hingham

THE WIND

The horse is only a cloud
winds chase. Winds chase
the horse with the black mane.
When you look up in the sky
you see the thunder running.
Have you ever seen the wind
go running by? If you have
you will soon see the wind again.
Wind is a mysterious thing.
The dogs they yip and bark,
but they will never know the wind.

Jennifer Abernathy
Whittier Elementary
Great Falls

The Grand Canyon grew and grew.
The man jumped off the ledge.
And the man glided.
He saw flowers and rocks.

Derrick Lathrop
Russell Elementary
Great Falls

I will go to college and be a famous painter
and fix cars plus have a ranch out
in the country by the river
and go to Crow Fair in August, then go
to rodeo, and try to be a good man at
home too.

Chico Red Star
Crow Agency Elementary
Crow Agency

A DAY TO REMEMBER
(after a painting by Sesly)

It was a cold day
when I walked home.
The snow blended
in my white tuxedo.
The trees were frozen.
Snow touched my heart.
Oh how nice it was
to turn around once more
to see the snow kissing.

Frank D'Angelo
Plentywood Elementary
Plentywood

GRANDPARENTS

When my grandfather
passed away my grandmother
used to sit in her old rocker
by the window and just stare
at the mountains
dreaming about him.
He sure was a nice old guy
in his bib overalls and
cotton shirt with his old
corn-cob pipe sticking out of
the torn pocket.
Their house was sure warm
and friendly when he was around
but now he's gone
and the house is dark
except in the corner by the window
where my grandma sits just staring.

Kyle Routh
Shepherd High
Shepherd

It is 7:15,
the sun is just peeking over the mountain tops,
the creek,
pure and clean,
still babbles on,
just as it would on any summer day.
The cabin floor feels
like a steel pipe on a winter day,
the iron stove begs
for the heat of a fire.
The bed,
still warm
from the night, mourns
from solitude.
Chipmunks
outside the front door
chatter for wanting of pancakes
they have not received.
Young deer graze
fearlessly on the new spring grass
still wet from the morning dew.
A soft breeze blows,
carrying with it a tiny column of smoke
from the cabin fire.
The breeze
in the pine trees
creates a peaceful melody
for all listening ears.
There is a kind of peace
and harmony
among all things here,
for early in the morning
they not yet fear.

Mark Lane
Ft. Benton High
Ft. Benton

In this photo sits
an old lady.
She stares at the wall
a very solemn expression
hides her face.

In her hand
she holds a cigarette.
The room is filled
with smoke and silence.

What does she think about,
as the sun
slowly sets?

Bret Argenbright
Big Timber High
Big Timber

PLAYING BASKETBALL

I see the ball in the air.
I touch the ball. I played with
the ball and soon as I was
ready to make a basket the
wind came and blew my hair
and the fresh smell smelled
good. It was a good smell
because God made it for us.
That's why it is clean
up there in heaven.

Lyndon Knows the Gun
Crow Agency Elementary
Crow Agency

DOOR KNOBS

door knobs always turning
they never get a break
round and handy
door knobs.

Allen Geissler
Emerson Elementary
Bozeman

THE HUNT

A fox flashes across the field
with his bright red tail to catch
a glimpse of. The small rabbit
runs for his life. The rabbit dashes
into his hole holding his breath.
A flaming paw reaches down
the hole. The rabbit is trapped.
Finally, the fox decides to find more
prey. The fox is a dart. He
must live by other creatures.
Rabbits are like targets.
They are the fox's aim.
Rabbits speak with fear
when the fox is present.

Craig Chauna
Chief Joseph Elementary
Great Falls

A TRAIL OF TEARS

Grandpa grabs my ewe
Very carefully
By the ear.
He puts an over-sized halter
And lead shank
On her small and wooly head.
My brother holds her
As he brings the 16-ounce
Hammer down.
She wobbles
But doesn't die.
The sun shines bright
As a cold spring breeze flows in.
My brother winces
As he hits her again.
She falls to the inch of old hay.
Her eyes flicker
Then close.
I sit in a lonely corner
Crying
As a trail of tears
Runs down my solemn face.

Alan May
Deer Park Elementary
Columbia Falls

OUR YARD

Our yard is a barren desert,
a junkyard of all junkyards.
The main population is dead mice
that look like three-day-old
mashed potatoes and gravy
with lumps in it. The grass . . .
is nothing but yellow from sunburn.
The mice that make it are chewing water.

Brett Reilly
Sun River Elementary
Sun River

THE DEATH OF THE DEER

I'm sad for the deer
I shot in the year of 1979.
O it was such a delicate
little thing and it didn't
take much to kill at 100 yards.
Someone's got to supply meat
for the family table, but why
such a graceful animal?
It didn't cry out at all.
It just fell dead at the bottom
of the hill. O I'm glad
the next door neighbor didn't
come from his farm house.
He would have turned me in.
I would have liked to see
the sorry expression on his face.
He would look me in the eye
and cuss me up one side
and down the other. I didn't
have to drag it very far,
but the gorey guts
and the exploded liver
was enough to curdle your stomach.
But then I didn't think of it
because I bet my brother
I'd kill a deer. I should have
shot the deer in the shoulder
but I gut shot him instead.

Kevin Hoson
Deer Lodge Jr. High
Deer Lodge

Helmet
crash against a tree
head OK, a little dizzy
Rest for a bit in the quietness
and go on.

Chris Line
Lewis & Clark Elementary
Missoula

WOMEN

Books age
like flowers sway.
The church sings
the sound of rain.
Women age as they sleep.

Jo Ann Bible
Ronan High
Ronan

The mud The mud - -
so squishy and slimy
in Missouri. Do you know
how to disco in the mud.

Sean MacCallum
Hawthorne Elementary
Missoula

Crickets sing in the sunset like people singing while
the rest of the world falls asleep.
Frogs croak by the silver colored water where
fish nap before the night is over.
Flies set their tired wings on their backs
as a spider crawls toward his web.

Tammy Dunn
Belgrade High
Belgrade

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH

Her shoes as black as night
Dusty after walking the miles
Getting home before the sun lost its light
Her dress a long black bulky skirt
Her birth in the eighteen seventies
After the settling of the North and South
An Iowa-born native with seven sisters and one brother
No father and no mother all seperated from each
Her plump little body and wrinkled little eyes
Would tell of the life she kept and of the loves she's known
Trampling half a mile to the barn then sitting for
Hours just reading the bible to the two men she loved
Hauling over to Montana with two families

My daddy who is quite old reminds me of the look
Of that picture of the dear old lady we all know
She was quite old when the picture was taken
But still in her eyes the time of the young
Looking at the chicks the calves and colts
And the young new land of the earth that she does own
The time of the past she holds in her eyes
The time running fast after the school bell had rung
My daddy does tell me of this old girl who is called mother
of the time.

Anna Everson
Ft. Benton High
Ft. Benton

I REMEMBER . . . .

Four weeks ago I went to the hospital
with my mom to see Grandma. I was not
old enough to see my Grandma, I had to
be fourteen like my cousin. My cousin
was there and she asked her mom if she
could sneak me up and she said yes. So
did my mom. We went up the exits.
I saw my Grandma.
Then I had to go. My aunt said just act
like you own the place, so we did.

Tammy Pardee
Mt. Jumbo Elementary
Missoula

Day breaks over windswept grasses
Shadows drifting over
The water's edge
Where tiny tadpoles like streaks
Of dark sky
Race in shallow pools.
The land is dead,
Killed by creatures that came long ago
But life is cracking from
The ancient earth
As a bird from its shell.
A new world opens
The past melts
Into a sunset of
Cars and spaceships.
The orange flock
Of shadows
Lifts like a cloud from the
Earth's center,
The new world is born.
Life is there
Building every moment,
But it will destroy itself in time,
Smothered by the universe
Eternally.

Leah Pratt
Washington Elementary
Missoula

SYLVIA AND ALEXANDER

Sylvia was walking along the wall trying to find the elevator. When she stopped a young man was in the way. "Would you move, please? You're in the way," she said.

He said, "What are you looking for?"

"I'm trying to find the twelfth floor."

He laughed. "You won't find it here."

"I know I won't find it here," she said. "I'm looking for the elevator." Sylvia said, "I know that too."

Alexander said (his name was Alexander Brown), "Then why are you looking for the twelfth floor then?"

"My mother is waiting for me on the twelfth floor. She just got out of the doctor's office," Sylvia said.

"But there's nothing wrong with her," Alexander said.

"How do you know? You've never met her before."

"I've never met her, but she's manager of this building."

"You're just kidding. I know you are. My mom's 45 years old, and she can hardly move."

"How old are you?" Alexander asked.

"I'm seventeen and eight thirds."

"What?"

"I'm seventeen and eight thirds. What that means is you take eight times three is 24, so it's 24 days until I'm 18."

"Oh, I see, sorta."

"Do you know your times facts?" Sylvia asked.

"Sure I do," Alexander said.

"What's nine times nine?"

"Eighty one," he replied.

"Twenty times twenty?"

"Umm four hundred," he said again. "That reminds me of a story. Once upon a time, when I was fifteen, I knew the wackiest man in town. His name was Mr. Zankle. He did crazy things. One day I ran into him on the beach. He said to me, 'Nice bright yellow bathing suit you have on.'

"I said, 'I don't have a yellow bathing suit on. I have a red one on.'

"He looked at me again. 'Oh, I guess you do have a red one. My eyes must be getting older than me. Let's catch some times fish.'

" 'What are times fish?' I asked.

" 'They're fish that know their times facts.'

" 'Oh,' I said.

"When we caught two of them we went to shore. I was walking the boat closer to the shore when a times fish jumped. I caught it. It wasn't slippery like other fish. I burped real loud, 'What's 81 times 81?'

"I said, 'I don't know.'

"He said, as he flipped back into the sea, 'Stupid humans, don't even know their times facts.' "

Heather Park
Meadow Hill Elementary
Missoula

PLAINS WIND

Oh when the wind comes whipping down
the plain, it whistles like a cop on the street corner,
it sounds like a bellowing echo in the night.

Chuck Phillips
Whitehall Junior High
Whitehall

CARELESSNESS

Chainsaws, spitting sawdust on the underbrush.
Splinters, wood chunks, and branches lay,
amidst the shrubs, the high-pitched scream
of the engine sets a ringing in my ear.

Dull expression on the teeth,
acting hungrily as they start
to open the tanned flesh.

Skin tearing, flung out of reach,
blood gurgling to an overflow,
where it will run down my leg.
Sharp jolt of the chain stopping
at the hard core of the bone.

I lay in wait for the pain,
but none emerges, a sense of
tingling rose through my body
as if it were ready to boil over.

I retracted the saw from my leg
it lay at rest murmuring at an idle position
I felt ashamed to let the saw overpower me.

I feel the muscles weakening
to the point of no contact
black out.

Mark Gordon
Bigfork High
Bigfork

LETTER TO A RICH MAN FROM HIS WIFE

You left me for money.
You stayed away for many a year.
The birds sang sorrowfully
overhead.

I was so lonely I could
have died. You came back.
I cried.

You cover me with riches.
Yet I am still lonely and
unhappy. Your money is all
that matters to you. You
stay out in your mines
until I can't stand it
anymore. Return from your
mines. I miss you.

Keir Graff
Paxson Elementary
Missoula

I am out walking
under the bent trees
as the wind blows
fearlessly through my hair.
My hard soles step
in the small daisies.

Patti Miller
Jefferson Elementary
Missoula

RAFTING CLARK'S FORK

His shout
echoes
in Tarkio Gorge.
The body wedged
in rocks below
smiles still.
You're running now.
Ten-foot claw
floods the raft,
stops the heart.
Choking free,
your laughter screams.
Your fear
rooster tails first cast.

His mistake - -
bow first through the chute.
Go broadside,
then dive to port
beneath the curl.
An oar floats by.
You miss a fish.
Rapids sing upstream.

David Dale, Teacher
Ronan High
Ronan

The screams of the wind
like rampant stallions
sway the house
and rattle the shutters
like the bony hands of the dead.
The creaking trees like snickering witches
threaten to crush
the unwary
and brush the winds with their needles.
The hex of the moon
not even full yet
spellbinds the valley
with an intense atmosphere
of the sweet smells of spring
intertwined with the repulsive smells
of rusted water and rotted carcasses
which waft into the air from
an unsuspected
placid
swamp.

Jim Withington
Belgrade High
Belgrade

VIEW FROM BELOW

The scorched sky
Ignited at the center
Then diminishing behind the horizon
Faint tracks leading farther than man has ever ventured
Are weathered to pulp
Like cobblestones in endless suspension
The moon, a speckled melon
Looking down on earth,
At its million mistakes.

Cathy Firpo
Bigfork High
Bigfork

ROAMING CHEETAH

He takes the world
in one stride across moonlight
in his second trip
like a family in its second
generation. He has
nowhere to go except the twenty
years in front of him.
An adorable guardian angel witch
roams in his fur
to see the sights of earth
like a clothespin
admiring a pretty dress.

Cameron Johnson
Morningside Elementary
Great Falls

MY BROTHER

My brother got in trouble.
I'm glad he did, but don't hurt him,
He's a nice brother, sometimes.

Mom yells,
Jeff cries,
I bury my head in my pillow.

I'm hurting for Jeff, yet I'm not.
It's done, no yelling.
No crying.
There's silence.

All I can hear is the swish, swish
of the footsteps on the rug.

Kim Newton
Bigfork Elementary
Bigfork

Laurie Hughes is my best older friend.
We met when we were about four and five.
I have friends now but it's not the same.

Trina Pettys
Willard Elementary
Missoula

TWO POEMS

The wind is someone's whistle.
It runs fast through the pines.
It carries the tune of a bluejay
Upon its invisible wings.
It carries the burden of coyotes
Who howl as the hunt begins.

The brown leaves listen
and sometimes laugh.
The wind blows through the trees.
This, a time when all is quiet,
when all stands silent,
when all lies silent.
When all waits, all listens.

Virginia Mugford
Chief Joseph Elementary
Great Falls

THE LADY WITH THE BROWN BAG

Up and down the aisles
searching for a really good buy
wonder what else she does
is she happy
bet she has a family
I think she's bored.
Why else would one spend so much time here.
There must be more to life than this.
She's here most every day
repeating the same routine
she could write a book.

Perry Todd
Big Timber High
Big Timber

Stone path stretching toward the garden.
Stones circling the faded lifeless petals.
Stone turns colder as the wind blows.
New life will come again.
Blowing warmth into the stiffened stems.
Graying branches leaflessly hang.
Stones stand by and watch it all.

Becky Harrington
Bozeman Senior High
Bozeman

LIGHT SWITCH

A slide that goes up and down
It turns 3 tiny suns on
A tiny brown dried tongue sticking out
of the wall

Tabitha Mockabee
Cornelius Hedges Elementary
Kalispell

MY ROSE

I have a little rose that runs
up the stairs every spring
to gaze at the new lamp
in the blue sky. As a white
pictured jelly falls down
from the sky like a belly-full,
and when the mist packs up
his white jelly and moves far away,
my rose shoots up once again.

Cathy Reed
Dwyer Elementary
Anaconda

DEATH AROUND THE CORNER

He begins to circle silently,
little by little, in a split
second, lands. Claws begin
to fly. It's done! A motor
starts, in his throat, softly.

Travis Hamann
Longfellow Elementary
Great Falls

Stones in the soup
Stones in the bread
Stones for eyes in a ginger bread
man's head
Eat the soup
Eat the bread
Eat the eyes of the ginger bread
man's head
Stones are good to eat

Anne Norberg
Bozeman Senior High
Bozeman

Painted rocks
elk herds, calendar signs
red marking
too far gone.
A small wind
to tell the story.

Richard Burns
Two Eagle River School
Dixon

THE POPCORN POPPER

It was Christmas morning. We couldn't open our presents till Grandma came, so I went outside to play. All of a sudden, a munchkin jumped out and gave me a popcorn popper. I said thank you and went inside and was getting ready to make some popcorn. Just then the telephone rang. I just left the popcorn. It started to pop.

When I came back the whole kitchen was full of popcorn. I just couldn't stop it. Pretty soon it was pouring out the doors. And then it was filling up the whole town. I went up to Snowbowl and everyone was skiing on it. It just so happened that a famous professor was in town. We went to see him. He told us to pull the cord out of the plug.

When we got home we did it, but it still didn't stop. I had an idea. I decided to ask the munchkin. I went outside and finally found him. When I asked him what to do, he said just eat the popcorn till it's gone.

We finally ate it all. And it worked. As soon as it stopped, I took it right back to the munchkin.

Emily Riquette
Meadow Hill Elementary
Missoula

LETTER POEM

Dear Mom and Dad:
As the snow falls swiftly
I wonder about you.
I hear your voices in the wind.
No sense,
just sound.
I do not understand,
just as you
do not understand me.
Why do you chain me
Am I not old
enough
to decide for myself?
You complain
when I don't want
to go with you.
Give me peace
to draw us closer
I so long for
the closeness
in which my friends
find their parents
but if I told you
my troubles
would you open your hearts,
do you grudge me
for being young?
Do you think me
the baby in your life?
I long for adulthood
but do not wish
for the problems
of your life.
Dad, your bottle
where you find pleasure
it hurts me so.
To break the bottle
would break your life
and the scattered pieces
would put my life
back together.
Happy Valentine's Day,
Love love love. Anne.

Anne Dowling
Helena Jr. High
Helena

The sky is about to rain.
I can see it's about to rain.
In the pond the fish want it to rain.
I can see it bump down on me
just like diamonds on my head.
As the fish say "I want it to rain,"
even the fishermen like it.
And I'm the only one that doesn't
like rain, but that was when I was three
years old. Now I'm 1000 years old
now I love rain. It's fun when it falls
on you.

Jason Kite
Longfellow Elementary
Bozeman

TWILIGHT

Twilight
is an instant in time
a moment when anything is possible.
Shadows are long, black
will-o-the-wisps
that cannot be trusted.
Cats become demons
the dim light harboring their bodies
and accentuating
their glowing eyes.
We can't even trust ourselves
for that brief moment of twilight
as our curious eyes focus
on the dim glow of light
in the black sky.
An eerie wish that we could be demons
too, envelops us.

Kathy Danielson
Sunburst High
Sunburst

HOLIDAY

You are a newborn sunset
rising out of your mother.
Your cherry cheeks fall on stars.
It is a holiday. Let's go play.
You are the conductor.
You can lead the music.
Now let's put up the tent
by the tree. We will haunt
your father, then meet the neighbors
and their caterpillar.
May we besiege you, sir?
We will perform for your father
the music we bring.

Kim Holiday
Willson Middle School
Bozeman

3:15

Fifteen minutes left of class.
When time wasn't is
And telling time was so hard
Something children never dared.
Eleven, until now is over,
from ten to nine - - if I could
only forget how to tell time,
then the clocks'
hands, like the crocodiles'
jaws, wouldn't snap the
time away.

Karen Smoot
Power High
Power

A clock is like a ticking
memory.

Joanna Schemm
Mountain View Elementary
Great Falls

FEAR

Fear was born in the wrinkled minds of ancient men
and raised with death.
Fear's toys had been shadows,
his playground
the world.
As he grew
he became curious
and went places he's never been.
Fear strolled through the closed, dark places
and filled them
with things that don't exist.
But still
he wanted more.
Fear wandered among the living
chiseling away their hope
laughing at their logic,
then sleeping in their dreams.

Blake Fordham
Belgrade High
Belgrade

MY PIANO

The keys on my piano are little buttons asking to be pushed
The sound comes out and you hear the keys vibrate
And your ears are hearing a tingle of beautiful sounds
Then you feel like singing
The little peddles are brakes on a car.

Susan Day
West Elementary
Laurel

PARTS OF ME

My nose
Is near-sighted.
My eyes
Can smell.
My head
Is a cue ball.
My ears
Are roller coasters.
My mind
Is a computer.
My finger
Is a clothes hanger.
My tongue
Is a tattle-tale.
My hair
Is a wig.
My leg
Is a log.
My arm
Is a branch.

Eric Cleveland
South Elementary
Laurel

PRELUDE TO THE WIND

I hear you crying - -
rushing through branches,
toppling leaves,
tearing kites away from
tiny hands.

I can feel you - - through my winter jacket
pushing me in whatever direction
you're going.
Through dusty streets
down twisting dusty roads.

Hiding behind clouds,
darting between houses - -
I can't see you
but know you're there
waiting to spit
dust in my eyes.

Ripened apples
clinging to trees yesterday
are splattered
on the ground.

By the time
tomorrow comes,
surely by the time
I reach my front doorstep,
you'll be gone.

Marta Lozano
Bozeman Senior High
Bozeman

Each day my uncle and I
bail hay, each day it gets
harder and harder. The feel
of hay is very much like the rough
dry hand of a very old lady,
the sound of hay a constant crunch
as we walk through it. It's
like a bunch of kids running through
a valley of twigs. Outside
of the barn birds are chirping,
flies are flying, bees a buzz.
As I look at the hay it turns
the color of golden leafs in fall.

Michelle Yellow Robe
Havre Jr. High
Havre

MY MEMORIES

My first day of school and being yelled at
for fooling around. And getting into a fight
with Puccah Old Horn. And getting five swats
that made my rear look like two Japanese
war flags. And my friend Conchlain the great
fast deer who was faster than anyone in the class.
We'd play wherever they let us.

Mark Bruised Head
Hardin Intermediate School
Hardin

DINO

He always seemed to be helping someone.

He always had to be moving.

He would, in discussion, speak about his grandmother and his parents. He knew about sports and he helped people that did not know sports too well.

He made me feel important.

It seemed like we couldn't feed him enough.

In my heart there will always be a special place for that wild and crazy Dino.

He always borrowed my pencils and broke them or lost them. But I didn't care.

I know he had many friends because we always waited for him to come to school every day.

Everytime I saw him he was happy. Now I can see a smile on his face forever.

Classmates of Dino Datsopoulos
Lewis & Clark Elementary
Missoula

MY FRIEND

My friend is like a song as you
are like a street of happiness.
He has hair like smashed-up stone.
To you it's a dirty rag.
He looks very grim, but he is lonely
as a person sitting in the wind.
My friend is like a song of many days.

Bruce Cramer
Longfellow Elementary
Bozeman

THE SKY

The sky roams like buffalo crossing
the big plains. The clouds are
Indians sneaking up on the
buffalo.

The birds are arrows sizzen through
the air in the wealth of flight. You
could feel the fall of the dying buffalo
like the wind. The sun cooks
the food.

The god looks at the Indians in flight,
he has the face of the moon.

That is the story of the
sky.

Keith King
Power Elementary
Power

All night, we try to sleep.
The moonlight rises
up on the hill
and the wolf begins crying.

Pao Gé Yong
Jefferson Elementary
Missoula

THE TIDE

You sit with your sister on a stone covered shore.
You ask her why the tide never reaches you.
She says the tide is afraid of you.
You chase it, knowing it will run from you.
You find yourself in an oyster shell. You struggle
but can't get out. The oyster opens
because you told it to. You step out to lead
your army. All the world's animals are your army.
You tell your army to kill all people.
You kill them because they aren't afraid of you.
You do not touch the people because you are afraid.
The tide realizes this and stops running. It turns
in a mighty wave and comes after you. You find yourself
sitting with your sister on a stone covered shore.
The tide gently laps against your feet. Quietly,
you ask your sister why the tide comes in.

Greg Buls
Meadow Hill Elementary
Missoula

Turtles dry in the road parched.
Sun bakes and cracks the earth.
I am in love. Rain waters
every thing down. The sun
plays hide and seek.
On a hot summer day
it is freezing.

Collaborative Poem
Two Eagle River School
Dixon

THE SEATED
(after Picasso)

The seated woman
looks worried,
not knowing what is going on.
She resembles a new born baby
coming into a strange new place.

Eric Peterson
Morningside Elementary
Great Falls

My third eye
sees a circus and a place
to hide.

Wesley Kimble
Irving Elementary
Bozeman

DEATH

One day my friend was in my room
with my lover. He looked in the mirror
and saw a dead tongue hanging
facing my cheek. I heard a crack
on the window and went to see
what it was. A falling star
said my lover was going to die
and return. The voice said Listen
to the shadow or they will
asphyxiate.

C.J. Ameline
Longfellow Elementary
Great Falls

WHEN I WAS ADOPTED

When I was two
my mom and dad
took me home
to live with
them and on
the way my
mom had to
stop at the
store and
when she got
out I started to
cry and my mom
had to
come back.
And when they
took me home I
had a bath
because I was
adopted.

Julie Fiscus
Emerson Elementary
Bozeman

THE RED-HEADED LADY
(after Mlle. Marcel Lender, Toulouse Lautrec)

This lady looks like a two-
combed rooster looking into sunlight.
Just came from a wedding.
The red rose on her shirt - -
That's what goes for the admiring
red-headed lady.

Terrie Day
Longfellow Elementary
Great Falls

Whitehall's so nice you wouldn't believe it.
The grass is so green it makes your eyes water.
The corn is so big you can make a gallon of whiskey out of one kernel.
The flies in Whitehall are so big you have to chain down your refrigerator.
So there!
Whitehall's just superfragilisticexpetaliotiously excellent
Whoopee
I wish a zillion dollars would
fall out of the sky and land on my doorstep.
I could have <u>everything</u> I wanted.

Pat Seccomb
Whitehall Junior High
Whitehall

The old stone entrance tops the hill
like a cherry on an ice cream sundae.

It sees everything, like the Highwood
Mountains far off in the distance,
the Missouri River raging in
the valley below and the farm
boy stopping to rest after picking
a load of rocks.

History is weathered deeply in
its worn crevices.

Standing even with the bluffs
orange and brown and slowly
fading, it competes for
the attention of those looking
for a picture.

It guards our little town like
a sentinel protecting a treasure.

Leslie Dailey
Ft. Benton High
Ft. Benton

BLUES

I've got those my mom wants me to clean my room blues.
I've got those my brothers bug me and use me as a punching
bag blues. I've got those I can't go to my friends until I
put my clothes in my dresser and by the time I put my clothes
away it's dark outside and I can't go blues.

Sheila Bartz
Roosevelt Elementary
Missoula

This boot is a slave, working hard as a beaver, trying not to give in. Its eyes see many things, animals, towns, cars. Its sole feels sharp and smooth things like tacks or pavement, or sometimes it slips on banana peels. This boot would like disco, a fast-moving dance that really gets you going, lively and exciting things it would like, running and playing with other shoes and boots. This boot likes night, for it's worked very hard all day and needs some rest so it will be ready for the next day.

Heather Hansen
Emerson Elementary
Bozeman

THE DOG

The dog that is brown with one leg missing
was walking with pain down the street.
When he would pass a person
that person would laugh and say
nobody wants that dog he could die
and no one would care.
But the dog didn't know or hear
what the people were talking about
he just walked on still feeling the pain.

Tim Greytak
Hingham High
Hingham

RUNAWAY LADY
(after Lautrec)

The poor lady has holes in her head
like volcanoes errupting. She is
a human mountain with sunshine red
strings of yarn growing, a vampire
with no fangs. She has deep eyes
like trenches filled with red acid
burning deeper in her head-shaped mountain.

Anthony Bertrand
Morningside Elementary
Great Falls

SKIPPING MOON

The moon helps the sky
because sun eats it.
The tarantula helps too.
It kills the sun.

Lesly Herman
Hawthorne Elementary
Bozeman

My name is Marilyn and I love to War Dance.
I am blue, red, yellow like a beautiful bird.
The bird sits in a tree
outside the window.
I love boys,
but I really love old cabins
full of letters.

Marilyn McGillis
Two Eagle River School
Dixon

STORY

I smashed on the brake.
The car twirled to the side of the road,
I almost hit a trailer,
    but the car stopped at a halt.
    The car was red.
It wasn't mine anymore.

Janice Mad Plume
Pikuni Community School
Browning

ON THE OTHER SIDE

When I was seven I got hit by
a car. And it felt like the skin
was over on the other side. And
I had to go to the hospital.

Merv Singleterry
Emma Dickinson Elementary
Missoula

ROWBOAT AT SUGAR BOWL

(a photograph by Henry Hamilton Bennett, Dells of the Wisconsin River, 1889)

Someone grasped the scene:
A man in common clothes
Rowing a boat
Away from a shore.
He's aimed for a break in the mountains
That opens to the waters beyond,
And he crosses in the high rocks' reflections
In the calm waters
On which he floats.

I see a man whose life
Is laid before him,
Undisturbed.
He cruises through the ridged rocks,
And the waters to the distant bank, for him,
Are smooth as well.
And he continues to row.
Not much effort is needed.

Some men, perhaps,
Are bored in still waters
And long for the rapids.

Sheila Hammond
Bozeman Senior High
Bozeman

RAIN AND THE DAY AFTER

She exhaled silently as she put
the book down and fell asleep.
Her legs began to shake
like a rusty motor just starting.
The rain landed on her eyelids.
In the morning she put on
her soft sweater and opened
the letter she received yesterday.
She began to stroke the mother cat's
long tail, which was moist
from the wet file. Her eye,
wrist, tongue, throat and legs
were wet. Last night she slept
on sandy ground in a circle
of pebbles. She split
logs for the fireplace. When she
sits down she thinks she hears
a burglar.

Jeri Jensen
Plentywood Elementary
Plentywood

THE EARTH

Winds blow, tall trees shudder,
but the earth sleeps.
The moon lays light upon the land.
The earth dreams on.
Shadows written in ink seal the waters,
and the earth forgives.

Elizabeth Pyeatt
Meadow Hill Elementary
Missoula

INSTRUCTIONS: TOP SECRET PAPERS

Within this case are very important
papers. Your instructions are to deliver
these papers to the corner of Malvine and
Pine, I forgot the town but it is somewhere
in Montana. At 5:15 or 6:15, I forget
which one, anyway a man dressed
as a woman or the opposite, whatever,
will be standing, wait, will be sitting
on a bench, waiting for the bus. To
describe the area: this is the only
corner in this town, or is there another.
I doubt it. Anyway, you have 2
no 3 hours, wait I'll give you 4 hours
to deliver this. If you are unable
to, I forget, but anyway good luck.

Leigh Croghan
Bozeman Senior High
Bozeman

THE GARDEN IN THE CORNER

Blanketed garden where
rotting fruit waits
solemnly for warmth.
Two lives are pinned
in their cushion, earth.
Trapped within their gates,
reeds like wandering people
who leave footprints in snow.

Greg Fraser
Ronan High
Ronan

WINTER CHANGES TO SPRING

When the snow's gone we go aim at
crows.
Out in the field the grass is
high and we are low.
The trees are putting on light
polka-dotted clothes.
The flowers are opening their
eyes to spring.
The grass grows green and we stay
the same color.
The kites start flying with big
long tails.
The crickets start singing and we
hum.

Eric Kraft & Pete Gray
Fred Graff Elementary
Laurel

THE NIGHT ANIMAL

A night is like a spill of water.
When the body of water gets up
you tremble and shake. And then it
embarrasses you because its stone head
opens and then you run until you
hear him fall and break. He gets up
and runs after you. You trip and fall.
You hear something like the moon
breaking, and you wake up.

Gary Glick
Dwyer Elementary
Anaconda

THE CITY, THE SKY, AND THE SNOW

The leaves look like bats hanging
on a rocky river bottom with water
rushing by and carrying pieces of ice.
They look like seeds clutching plants
while air tunnels suck them into
the white mummy ranges.

Snow looks like strips of bandages
being unwrapped from a mummy and
being carried in a big strip across
the sky.

The cars look like tanks being hit
by missiles, or evidence being
buried by the devil. With salt.

The sky looks like foam covering
city toys in a huge tub. Or a giant fire
place with ashes being stirred up.
Or a shower showering sugar. Or
fog covering the ocean.

Kimberly Heron
Lowell Elementary
Missoula

SUMATRA (ASSUMPTIONS)

That house is where 30 people were murdered.
They say the killer is still in town.
The people do very little to keep it clean.
Once they were ambitious enough to paint
the grain elevator.
But that was 45 years ago.
None of the people go to church,
because the minister was murdered.
The people stay here because they have nowhere
else to go.
There's the statue of the mayor from 80 years ago.
That was when the town was more prosperous.
The children don't go to school.
They work in the fields.
If they are caught playing,
they are whipped.
Old Mrs. Higgins whipped her son to
death because he smiled at her.
The people just seem to live forever.
If someone does die they leave them lay.
If someone tries to bury them they are
stoned to death.
Needless to say, there is no graveyard.
This town was once a prosperous gold
mining community.

George Tate
Dawson County High
Glendive

TRAMPOLINE

When I go home at night,
I change my clothes,
and go jump in the dark black sea.

Jenny Mackay
Cornelius Hedges Elementary
Kalispell

The old man's beard is gray like the smoke from his pipe.
His head is almost bare,
Wrinkled, soft,
Soft as a loaf of newly baked bread.
His orange plaid shirt lies under his dark plaid coat,
For the wind blows chilly.
His red glasses show the outlines of his eyes
Disappearing behind his ears like a road bending around a hill.
His friend tags along beside him.
He holds her hand between his wrinkled fingers.
His covered smile is behind his beard of gray clouds
Like the sun behind decreasing storm clouds.
The man, standing erect as the pole behind him,
Wishes his life could be as continuous
As the long black wire
Bending through the poles.
They both wander on
Heading for the small brown cardboard-looking shack.
Together they live alone.

Pam Andersen
Havre Jr. High
Havre

SENILE AND VERY STRANGE

James VanCampen is his name and
he's not really all that bad.
Although he has at least five
children and he's probably fifty
years old. His mind is coming
and going and he's big and fat
and he sings and dances and can
play anything with strings.

Tracy Glanty
Franklin Elementary
Missoula

ODE TO THE HORSE

He stands on a hilltop
Transparent to the earth
Hindquarters bulging with muscle
Like a stretched-out egg
Ready to burst

Tail, mane, and forelock
Blowing in the wind
Like rippling water
On a lake
With a blue shadow

He nickers
Like a school bell
The brown and black
Cloud of mares
Comes thundering

And lightning
Across the field
Of golden flowers
To meet him
His challenge is loud

And clear
Like a bugle
He's proud, strong
The world of mares
Belongs to him

Kimber Hofer
Deer Park Elementary
Columbia Falls

THE EXECUTION

They raise their guns and fire.
Men drop. Is this fair?
On the outskirts of town
citizens see this brutal thing.
The road is bloodstained.
People lie there.
Is this death?
Is this the way
It's gonna be for me.

I hope not. I hope not

Steve Collins
Deer Lodge Jr. High
Deer Lodge

WE HAD FUN

My grandpa and I
we used to have so much
fun. The last time I was there
I was about seven and knew it
was the last time I would
see him. I wanted to make
it the funnest time. Every
time I went there he would gather
feathers for me because I thought
I could fly. And when we were
watching TV and he didn't
like the show we were watching
he would turn on his
breathing machine. And then we knew
so we would watch what he wanted
to watch. Sometimes I still think
of him alive but sometimes
just flashbacks.

Mandy Hanson
Willson Middle School
Bozeman

GOATS

Goats run like a shadow.
Goats heads are stone
like a huge giant. They
are embarrassing when they run.
They are dirty animals,
as dumb as a glass of milk
getting spilled. They flop
their tails like drunken cowboys.

Dan Gallagher
Dwyer Elementary
Anaconda

I remember when I was four years old
and my mom had some friends over from
next door and there was a girl there
too and me and the girl went into the
livingroom and danced.

Mark Goodson
West Elementary
Laurel

HIM, ME, AND NATURE

We break over the hill
leaving civilization behind.
Dad leads the way through the fir forest
To the edge of the lake.
Him, me, and nature.

He helped me put my pole together
and dig for worms.
The cold dirt felt good on my small hands.
I didn't clean the mud off my black rubber boots.

Unseen birds sang in the quiet shade
and the water licked the shore
bouncing logs on its surface.
He walked out on one, offering a hook
while I teased the playful sunfish
with a fat, pink worm.

A little girl capturing wishes
and her heroic father catching trout for supper.
We went up the hill while the sun hid behind it
holding hands and carrying our prize.

Laurie Harness
Bigfork High
Bigfork

LIFE IS STILL

I remember her
sitting in her rocker.
She was knitting
a sweater for her dog.
I loved her little gray face
strong as winter.
She never did give up.

Eric Humberger
Willson Middle School
Bozeman

SPRING

The brown men with a thousand arms
    Come to life,
They turn into green monsters.
The little people that come out of the ground
    Turn green.
The big elephant's trunk grows a thousand green arms.
The big ball of fire shines down on
    The one-legged monsters.
When spring comes, and the snow melts,
    The road looks like dirty water.
The two eyes drive along the road at night
    When the big ball of cheese glows.
The fuzzy little animals climb up the brown men.
The little birds sit upon the little green fingers.
The red men sit on corners full of water.
The brown men's arms grow green fingernails.
Now you should know about the things
    That happen in spring.

Tracy Noel & Katie Decker
Fred Graff Elementary
Laurel

AN ELK

As it moves swiftly across
the meadows like a soaring
bird in the dusk of the day,
it bounces across green
wheatfields, gathering dew
that lay from a humid night
on its hooves. It feeds
on many willows. Through each
dawn and sundown it roams
until one day it reaches
its great place in the ground.

Pat Harmon
Chester Elementary
Chester

FOLK SONG

A sadness touch to it
and a deer sleeping in winter
and just waking up. And a slow
waterfall slowly running
a food of pouring milk
into cereal.

Denette Anthony
Mt. Jumbo Elementary
East Missoula

LIFE

The red but
small peace
is the part of life
if you don't think so
it's because
you have no wife
because you left
your wife, so now
you have no life.
The small peace of life
is the small red wife.

Bret Cramm
Russell Elementary
Missoula

MY STREAM

My stream invents a smile on my face,
The look and feel soothes magically,
The coolness of mud under bare feet,
The tenderness of the water slips over my body,
The sweetness of the air
Like the smell of new hay.
The sound is like a highly trained orchestra.
When winter comes, the water only whispers,
Its silent song floods the air like a bird
Who sings its death song.
Its beautiful melody puts you to sleep.
When sunshine shows on my stream,
It smiles a glistening smile back,
A weeping willow lets its branches droop
Into the water.
The willow is sad,
It lost its love long ago,
And it weeps now,
But my stream soothes the willow.
I like my stream and it likes me.

Wendy Wojciechowski
Washington Elementary
Missoula

When I was laying on the ground
I felt like the time had stopped
and waited for me to get back up
and start walking again.
But it felt so good
I just layed there
for a pretty long time.

Curtis Morigeau
Two Eagle River School
Dixon

SONG OF JEREMY

Sitting in Silence.
The speakers of truth drifting
away.
Not knowing of my
thoughts.
No reason to
stay.
Far, far away, I'll go,
on a long walk through the
"Song of Jeremy."
Never
come back!
Shining bright, the price of death
swimming deep down in the
rivers of life.
Crying out for
help.
A call to speaker, as
the sunbeam burns
out.
Tears
falling like red
raindrops, a nonstop shower!
Hearing, but only
Jeremy.
The time of Twelve comes,
at last . . .
Rest.

Merri Lou Flake
Seeley-Swan High
Seeley Lake

RAIN

Crowded around the fireplace
Saying nothing to each other
The tv comes on
The lights flicker, go out
Light the candles & lamps
Look out the window
Everything's black
Something hits against the house
Crunch closer to the fireplace
Like an electric sword, lightning lights up the sky
Nobody talks
The wind, howling
Feels like window is going to bust
Can't go to sleep
Tearing at the house
Can't see very good
Candle burns out
Warm by the fireplace
Come closer to it
Wait

Roger Hammersmark
Big Timber Grade School
Big Timber

Every night after school,
I milk the cows,
flies and all sorts of bugs
swarm around my head.
The milk squirts into the pail.
Warm milk
like a hot summer day,
the white milk
like new fallen snow.
The smell of the warm milk,
like yuk
the udder.

Tiffany Wood
Havre Jr. High
Havre

PORCUPINE

His warm body
tucked in the hole
before the first night star
the porcupine burns away
his worries like a house on fire.
Even with his eyes closed
a sudden crack breaks the silence
The porcupine is circled
by the night's shadow, ready
to kill or die,
to march out in darkness
like a flower from a bud.
Death is upon him.
Soon it will be over.

Pam Ridgeway
Meadow Hill Elementary
Missoula

Dumb is what you say
to an enemy. His bones
hurt him when you say that.

John O'Conell
Longfellow Elementary
Bozeman

MY BEST FORT

I was at a dump
Terry and I were taking a seat from an old car
We took it out of the car and found two pennies
They were made in 1953 and 1951
We dragged it up a steep hill and down to our fort
Then we made it into a couch
We collected skulls of antelope, deer, and mice

Mike Christensen
Big Timber Grade School
Big Timber

3RD DEGREE

114 Apartment Building 2
Nearby huge garbage rooms
Full of trash and other smelly things.
The best place to play
Treasures like broken toys and puzzles
With 7 pieces missing.
In the huge white and silver containers
Lots of bottles and things
Full of no-no's and ouches
That mothers had explained.
But why not
We found some plumbing acid
I a stupid 4 year old
Thought lotion when I saw it.
It slowly dripped down my legs
I still have scars to remember it.

Laura Ramage
Willson Middle School
Bozeman

PHILLIPPE HALSMAN
(after his photograph of choreographers)

Phillippe created magic.
His magic was so fine as to
Make an ugly lady
Out of a beautiful swan.
The feathers became cheap ornaments
Glued to her bony hips.

Then not content with his swan trick,
Phillippe created one man who could not
Touch the ground,
But was forced to remain suspended.
Forever.
He hung about,
Frequently swinging his legs
To ease the monotony.

Phillippe's other magic feats bombed.
He tried to create love,
But only managed to conjure people
Who were
Touching only themselves.

Sheila Stahl, Teacher
Power High School
Power

THE BLOOD
(after Goya)

The stinging kiss of a bullet
heads for your body to shed blood.
Before you know it you are
in a puddle, for it flows
like a river through the wound.
Bang. Another one down
bleeding with the kiss of leaving
forever to the ground.
Everyone falls with a merciful
plea for life. But it is not
going like that. Stacking up
like bales of hay - -
the way to go.

Sheila Halverson
Plentywood Elementary
Plentywood

MY MOM

My mom's gray hair
is so gray
it's almost white
it also is the best
hair I've seen.
My mom tries to get
rid of her gray hair
she almost gets it
washed out
but she can't get
it all washed out.

Paul Machado
Potomac Elementary
Potomac

SNAILS

The warm summer rain has stopped.
I kneel upon the sidewalk, looking
At snails.
The moon is shining.
He walks up.
Talks.
Fright, I take fright.
My head screaming run, run . . .
I turn, walk, slam the door.
In the morning
He is gone.
The snails lie broken on the sidewalk.

Vicki Tennancour
Seeley-Swan High
Seeley Lake

THE BASS GUITAR: WARNING

Watch out for this guitar,
it's very loud when it
sees you. Don't look at
him, he'll run at you
and try to kill you
with his music.
And then he'll dance
around and say, Do you
know how to boogie? And
when you say no, he'll
try to dance with
you and he'll make
you dance even if
you don't know how.
He sounds like this:
Zap zap arrrooooo!

Donovan Taylor
Hardin Intermediate School
Hardin

THE WINTER
(after Sesly)

I walk on the street, wind
biting at my face,
houses are warm and inviting.
The snow is blowing now.
Next to me there is a garden.
The trees have snow-topped crowns.
I think of a fairy wonderland, but
then I think 'How childish and stupid.'
I go into my house.

Van Tveldt
Plentywood Elementary
Plentywood

IN THE CELL

Feelings - - - Go home
Bed - - - If I could I would crumple the
bed up and throw it at you
Getting out - - - I would go through the
steel bars in the window
Senses - - - I would hear things see things feel things
smell things and taste things - - - I can hear
and see the water dripping. I can taste
feel and smell the terrible food.
Work - - - Make license plates

Anna Burkhalter
Irving Elementary
Bozeman

THE BLUEBIRD

The bluebird moves
through the air
gliding easily
softly
no cares in the world.
Don't shoot this bird down
for if you do
no more lovely sounds
no more singing on Sunday mornings.

Denise McCracken
Franklin Elementary
Missoula

THE LIFE OF A TRAPPER

Dad trapping good, he smiles as he fleshes
the coyote. He strings steel all the day
and skins the night away. "Proof of the
pudding", he announces as he brings in a big
load of pelts. "Can I watch you Dad?" as he
pulls out his fleshing knife and goes to work.
He continues on late into the night.

Billy Phillips
Bozeman Sr. High
Bozeman

THE YOUNG BOY
(after a photograph by Lewis W. Hine)

The young boy looks
like a little toy that
was wound up and
made to walk in a
straight line and
the strict lady
has no care in the
world but to walk
away and the big
sidewalk is like
a giant checker
board and in
the street there is
a light pole like
a tree with no branches
or leaves.

Randy Herz
Hawthorne Elementary
Missoula

OUT OF MY POCKET

Your mouth is like a motor and your mother
looks like a burglar. She read my feet
when she kissed me and stroked my wrist.
She pulled a letter out of my pocket
and read it, then exhaled it into my sweater.
Then she pulled a moon out of my pocket
and let it go.

Brad Michel
West Jr. High
Great Falls

THE EAR

Flabby hat seashell steady a
fishing net a roller coaster a bottomless
pit

Tony Prill
Fred Graff Elementary
Laurel

Dear Lee: Today has been a gloomy
day, the sun is hiding behind the clouds.
The trees and wind aren't making a sound.
Everything is quiet. The clouds are whispering
"snow" as we look at them. It makes us whimper
in our clothes. I wonder if you ever feel strange
in your clothes. Yours Truly, Tina.

Tina Morrow
Two Eagle River School
Dixon

POODLE

Poodle big and black
I remember him well
pretty smart, sometimes
he was very spoiled
but they all liked him.
In the end, he went crazy.

Julie Sindelar
Shepherd High
Shepherd

BLUE JEANS

Blue jeans are coming in style
with holes in the pocket and belts
on the loops and wide and skinny
legs that look like long wires
to a control box down at the station
where everything is busy and moving.

Rich Powell
Lewis & Clark Elementary
Missoula

LISTENING TO RY COODER

Three farm boys
just got out
of school
in their overalls
they sing.

Michelle Griffin
Russell Elementary
Missoula

We don't always have kissable eyes
Sometimes our nose
Does all the work.

Trina Ator
Plentywood High
Plentywood

SUNSET HORSES

The horses were beautiful as swans
in a marshy swamp bank. They gnawed
on sweet green grass. A cricket
caught my eye. He blended in
with the grass as a snowflake
blends in with the sky.
The horses saw me and bowed
Nervously as a newborn child.
I walked down the road and saw
a field tinted with snow colored frost.
I saw an early riser. He was a field mouse.
The little creature stared at me
with glittering eyes, then dashed off
under the stubbles of wheat.
I thought to myself in the strangest way.
I saw a rustle in the wheat.
It was the same cricket pouncing around
by the horses. I saw the horses
in the distance.

Emmett Murphy
Whittier Elementary
Great Falls

A BACK HANDSPRING

a piece
of rubber flipping back and forth
a trampoline
waving back and forth after you jumped on it
the ocean
rolling up and down
the
clouds flipping over the wind
bouncing ball
a folded piece of paper

Gina Waddell
Fred Graff Elementary
Laurel

MLLE. MARCEL LENDER
(after Lautrec)

Open your eyes.
See what you have created.
My eyes lack color.
The hair you chose burns
deep embarrassment into me.
You fool, my hat
is not on straight.
You have wasted this canvas

Van Faylor
West Jr. High
Great Falls

MOLES

Eyes of a mole are like little
pebbles on the beach - -
claws as big as their faces
to dig the land, a way
to build their dens.
Their mouths have sharp
teeth to split with, to help
dig. Their fur is a soft
sweater that flies in wind.
They seal the den in the morning
to sleep, they like
moist dirt to sleep in.
They know the dust
might kill them.
When they become pests,
they are trapped, lie down
and exhale their guts
in the shadow of death.
The survivors mother their young
and go on again.

Jim Anderson
C.S. Porter Elementary
Missoula

EPIPHANY

One day while hiking
in the woods
I came upon an unusual tree.
It made me stop and think of how
a tree could grow that way.
A fallen tree
well rotted and destroyed
had other trees
coming from it.
They looked quite healthy
and full of life,
all willing
to receive the world.

Brian Miller
Potomac Elementary
Potomac

I'll go through a door to get
to my own world. It can be a
door with bright paint or a door
with smudgy kid prints around
the handle. I like all doors if
they take me to a quiet place
for even a few minutes. I like
doors that let me hear Agency
Creek when it's full of melted snow
and doors that let me climb steep
switchbacks to sit on sunny stumps.
I look for doors that let my hands
plant potatoes in warm dirt holes
let me scratch my lazy dog's belly.

I call them my just a minute doors.

Emily Lennon, Teacher
Paxson Elementary
Missoula

A DAY'S WORK

The farmer comes home after working
all day. His arms are like melted ice
on a window. As he comes in the house
he leaves mud tracks on the floor.
He had been digging an outhouse
foundation. As he sweats, this washes
his face.

Jim Christensen
Deer Lodge Jr. High
Deer Lodge

THE GREATEST MAN I KNOW

Here sits my grandfather
wearing his bib overalls
one shoe on
the other foot hanging over the arm of a chair.
He is working the Gazette crossword puzzle
easily filling in blanks
french words and synonyms.
His paper slides
you can hear his short inconsistent snores
back drops his head
awake
as if it was a second after his last answer.
On the back of his chair there is an afghan
made by my grandmother
they are proud of using their talents to survive.
Daydreaming now
back on the ranch
this pitchfork doesn't work
to heck with those modern bales
loose hay is so much easier.
Back to the puzzle.

Barbara Pedula
Big Timber High
Big Timber

THE TURKEY

Once I met a turkey wandering
in the forest.
I said hello he said cluck cluck.
So we walked and talked and played.
I liked that turkey
we became very good friends.
His name was Cluck Cluck.
He looked like a rainbow.

Shannon Sawyer
Cold Springs Elementary
Missoula

SNOW MAN

Above: round
Night: ghost
Day: it's so white I can't
see him
Spring: melting
Far away: it's running toward me
as if it were something else: a person
In different sizes and shapes: small
and four round circles

Story:
This snow man has
had some big experiences.
He once went to Lolo Hot
Springs and almost fell off the
big boulders into the water.
Then he was the 9th
snow man in the cafe.
So he got a free dinner.

Autumn Dearborn
Hawthorne Elementary
Missoula

UNDECIDED

A junior-high lass is a curious blend
of little girl and junior miss,
One day she is but an innocent child,
the next day she's ripe for a kiss;
A perfect example I saw just last week
tripping airily out of a shop - - - -
In one hand she held a lit cigarette,
In the other a big lollipop!

Imogene Hansen, Teacher
Helena Jr. High
Helena

When I was seven my Grandpa got a stroke and we had to take him to St. Joe's. I wanted to see him but I could not. It was the saddest time in my life. Then he could walk again.

Amina Ghadder
Roosevelt Elementary
Missoula

WATERFALL REPEATS

The soft sound
of running water,
like the eaves getting rid
of their burden.
It becomes louder
louder
as I dream
along wearily
with
no thought
of a care.
It settles
then once again repeats
its vows
to the world.

Kathy Graham
Big Timber Grade School
Big Timber

THE SPREADING FIRE

I'm sitting in the middle
of a field in Montana
There is a deer
running far-off
There are birds
They are screaming
It seems that they are
trying to say something
I turn around
There are big flames
that are shot into
the big blue sea
of air. The wind
is winding through
the trees
The flames
follow the wind
through the trees

Bill Wood
Seeley-Swan High
Seeley Lake

GOPHERS

Gophers in the spring
become curious
for they've been sleeping
for awhile
and want to look around.

Hunters find gophers easy prey
gophers will not hide
the hunter can easily
end their curiosity.

Paul Jurenka
Hingham High
Hingham

FOLLOW ME

Pigs are people too
they have curly tails
sunday in the park is fun
birds flying all around
cats chase dogs
flowers passing by
children flying around
kites walk and play
children reach up to the sun
burn their hands
the moon glitters in the night
ducks have lives.

Terina Marchbanks
West Elementary
Laurel

DO THINGS

I play poker with a fan.
Even though a cap
has a beak it can't talk.
I wear a wheel on my
head.
My cow squawked at me
when it was
hungry so I fed it
some sticks.
A shamrock is
something that
will never see
and never talk.
When I shuffle
my cards talk to me.
I can wear the spine
of my note book.

Shawna Gerke
South Elementary
Laurel

WHEN I WAS SMALL

When I was small
I pushed my sister
out of my mom's lap.
I wore my dad's boots
and wore holes in them.
I painted the walls with
play-dough and stained them.
When I was small I ate
rocks, mud, wallpaper paste
and other stuff.
I sang songs like
Hello, how are you.
I played games like
Ah, uh, oh,
and was a lot of
trouble.

Theodosia Peters
Emerson Elementary
Bozeman

IT'S ALL THE TRUTH

My name is Knuckles.
I am 1,000 years old.
I am eating paper for supper.
My great-aunt's name is Steve.
While I was eating a
gingerbread man ran out
of the oven.
I ran after him, I saw
a purple-with-pink-
polka-dots cat.
I went back and ate
with my Uncle
Missy. We had green
yarn with yellow
stripes. The
next day in first
grade I played marbles
with my glass eye.
For lunch the main
course was
birch trees.
My mother's name is
Albert and my father's
name is Alice.

Patti Hunter
Whittier Elementary
Missoula

I'm a snake I climb
up trees I live in Africa
I eat first graders
They're good

Derrick Muchmore
Emma Dickinson Elementary
Missoula

THE SECRET

Stranded
on an Island
white sand
coconut trees
a girl and a boy
are happy here, happier
than they would ever seem
in a large city.
They run and play
in their seal skins.

Al Miller
Bozeman Sr. High
Bozeman

CHRISTOPHER WEBER

Christopher Weber
is like a ransom note
dangerous
and when he gets mad
he sends smoke signals out his ears.
He puts his thoughts in a bottle
and telegrams them off.
He talks like braille,
we can't understand him.
He is like a mirror,
his reflection is
all over
and when you see people running
that is a warning that Christopher Weber is coming.
His face is all over wanted posters
for sending out invitations
and for being funny.
He is a walkie talkie,
he is mean.
He is Christopher Weber.

Tim McAlpine
Power Elementary
Power

A MISERABLE DAY

Boys swim and then dogs bite.
Because dogs bite, parents swear.

Because parents swear, midgets
run, and I get murdered.

When I get murdered, people cry.
When I cry I fall to the stars.

I fall to the stars and the sun smiles.

Because the sun smiles, the rooster
crows and I wake up from my dream.

Margie Wodarz
Chester Elementary
Chester

SHADOWS

Shadows linger with you
like lint on a black sweater.
They dance behind you like a child
clinging as part of your future.
When your spirits are high
your shadow is dark and tall.
When you are down,
it tags along misty and not vague.
A shadow speaks with you,
it is a window of your mind
opening up the shutters to your dream.
A shadow is part of you.

Susan Custer
Washington Elementary
Missoula

PAYING ERIC

I owed him one dollar.
There was one penny interest every day.
When I walked in the classroom
he reminded me,
asking for the money.
Then he had to move.
I gave him a dollar.
The morning he was leaving
I pulled
out of my pocket the other dollar.
He refused it,
walking off with his head down
and dragging his feet.

Daren Charvat
Paxson Elementary
Missoula

THE WIND OVER OUR ROOF

The wind over our roof
Was an elegant ghost, howling

It looped around our yard
Stopping now and then to swing and
rest

I went outside
To deliberately try and make it
quit

It swirled around me
And tried to soak me up

I got as mad as a hornet
But I didn't let out a whisper.

Mary Wagner
Bigfork Elementary
Bigfork

HELL

I walk and walk
and walk
I have been walking forever
every heartbeat seems to
sing in my ears.
To my left
an endless wall
forever
in its length and height.
To my right
nothing
a vast wasteland.
With every step
the past
is being swallowed up behind
me.
The only direction
forward.

Dennis Knoll
Dawson County High
Glendive

WHEN I WAS FOUR YEARS OLD

I had an eye operation and
I got to have 7-up and
popsicles I was with my
Dad and was on top
of a bunk way up high I
had to have shots and
eye drops in my eyes
I was in a tall hospital
I sat in my bed all
day and night and
sometimes went in the
playroom and played
with other kids
Another girl and I both
had pink nightgowns
Oh how I missed my
family and my
Grandpa and my
Grandma
I was in Salt
Lake City

Rebecca Garner
Cornelius Hedges Elementary
Kalispell

The moon is a ball of
    yellow cheese.
It is a soft bed
    of feathers.
The stars are bright shiny dishes,
they are like baby goblins
    just getting their horns.
The night is a witch's dress,
a ghost getting dirty.
The morning sun is like yellow taffy,
the morning sun is like fresh corn
    off its stalk.

Lori Gerlach
Whittier Elementary
Bozeman

Blue Corvette
come take me away
I need to go beyond the hay
I'm sick and tired of this old farm
and I wish I could win her charm.
Blue Corvette
come take me away
I want to be with her today.

Don Pelletier
Sunburst High
Sunburst

DANGEROUS

I'm taking a walk
in the mountains. I see
some trees so big they
look like skyscrapers.
I see a little lizard he looks
like a tiny bus I see
a beaver he looks like a
towtruck I see a little
chipmunk he sees me and
runs he looks like a little
race car I see a deer
he raises his head he looks
like a forklift. Then
I hear something growling at
me I turn around and
see a great big black
bear he doesn't look like any
car I know of. To me he
looks dangerous.

Matt Woody
Mountain View Elementary
Great Falls

THE STREET WAS CHASING MY NAME

I said I hate you. You said
the street to me. My mom and dad
said you are lying. The next day
the street needed help. Snow
fell and the street needed
more help. I did not help him.

Joel Wilson
Hawthorne Elementary
Bozeman

WHEN I WAS IN THE KITCHEN

I remember
when I broke a big glass on my hand
by doing the dishes. I had to have
stitches. I sounded like a dump truck
running over a window.
It hurt bad!

Dallas Johns
Emma Dickinson Elementary
Missoula

FRANKY

Franky was a good fish.
He chased the goldfish
and bit off their tails.

Miss Amdor found a sore
on his tail. We put him
in a tank alone. He died.

Franky was a good fish
sometime. Mr. Butler said
he probably came back
in the shape of a car.

I felt sorry for Franky.
He was a mean little fish
but I liked him.

Marcia Standiford
Chester Elementary
Chester

Stones of the rings of kings.
Stones that give life and power.
Stones that rule man and beast.
Unbeatable.
Powerful.
Indestructible.
Stones of the rings must live.

Charlie Baker
Bozeman Senior High
Bozeman

FAR AWAY

I was far out of
town riding a horse
all by myself in the
hard dumping rain
and my shadow at dusk
splintered in the grass

Reuben Anderson
Mountain View Elementary
Great Falls

WHAT IS

What is time
When wind is blowing
What is wind
A message from a faraway place
What is a place
Where words are spoken
What is a word
Throwing breath
What is breath
An ocean of air
What is an ocean
A place to go fishing
What is fishing
To catch life
What is life
You

Sean Tureck
Dawson County High
Glendive

If I were a tree
I'd be standing
there listening
in the tree
and in the night
I'd be standing there
singing with the birds
with shining eyes in
the tree.

Jennifer Chief Child
Crow Agency Elementary
Crow Agency

JUST FOR A MOMENT

The moon floats so peacefully.
Imagine the break in the sky
like a little tremble, just
for a moment, miles away.
The skin of the earth
rises away. The world turns
to a new century. Listen ahead.
Break through to a new world.

Jodi Doheny
C.S. Porter Elementary
Missoula

WOMAN BEFORE AN AQUARIUM
(after Matisse)

She is dark, dark as midnight air,
snowpeach skin tough as a callus.
She stares into emptiness, circles
and lines forming a wall. A goldfish
pours out of his house. Deep scales
sink into the fish, the sunset
shining on the fish-blue water.

Carolyn Myers
Willson Middle School
Bozeman

STOLEN WORDS

You pretend to drum with your hands
but songs are not civilized these days
the winds smash down the streets
snow blows up your nose
hair is long in your face
your bones ache for warmth
you bleed for help
friends are nowhere in sight
you stand alone on the street
morning comes you find dreams
hurt the same.

Oral Running Crane
Pikuni Community School
Browning

THE STAR

Star . . . a mark in the sky that grabs my attention.

An angel sometimes shoots out of its place
to fall to earth.

The sparkling speck astonished farmers
who sweat on their acreage, pushing plows
to fill human bellies.

Its big sister, moon, swells up to cast
a shadow on the world.

Some mark this window of the world a tear.

Adoration heaves away.

Arthur Walker
Sun River Elementary
Sun River

YOUR EYES

Your eyes come up
behind you as the bells
ring through soft wind.
And no, you can not
hear him, You can
see him. I like wind,
but trees still
wander in the blue sky.

Nikki Harvey
Whittier Elementary
Bozeman

STOPPING TIME

I see a box throwing color-blind pictures
at a pair of eyes
which stare
forever
letting time
pass
like an old lady
knitting hands.

Sean Tureck
Dawson County High
Glendive

LISTENING TO CLASSICAL MUSIC

Deer, it sounds very happy sad.
But it is blue pretty. It sounds
summer, like it's fall.
The wind is blowing fresh air
the leaves off the tree.
It's a sad song to me
it sounds like somebody crying.

Jeannie Beaver
Mt. Jumbo Elementary
East Missoula

THE ARTIST AND HIS MOTHER
(after Gorky)

This is my mom. She is graying
and her arthritis is flaring up
more frequently now. This is our
house in the background. It is
a nice house I think. We live
on a farm in western Montana.
My dad died a few years ago.
It's been a tough life.

Tim Anderson
Willson Middle School
Bozeman

THE HARE AND THE BLUEJAY

In the woods where the wind blows
and the pines wave, a bluejay and a hare
sat. Said the hare to the bluejay,
Let's trade. So the hare sat in this tree.
The jay tried to hop. The hare tried
to sing. They both gave up and said
to each other, Be yourself, not
who you want to be.

Lisa Nussbaum
Chief Joseph Elementary
Great Falls

UNDER THE APPLE TREE

Standing under the apple tree
it's dead.
Dry leaves
no apples
it's hot.
Suddenly the tree blossoms!
Plenty of apples.
Birds, fox and me pick apples.
Suddenly flowers grow
under the apple tree.

Stacia Copeland
Potomac Elementary
Potomac

APPLE, ORANGE, PEAR

A white swamp.
A red heart.

Looks like craters on the moon up close.
Oranger than people on the moon.

A weird bomb.
A steep slide.

Colin McAuliffe
Lowell Elementary
Missoula

BONES

The birds were flying,
gliding in air, willows
slashing in the wind,
laughing.
    Dogs roaming the flat
land playfully chase
the swaying weeds.
These golden hills
are old. The bones of
the dead lie all around.
This is the picture
time has painted.

Billy Jo Gilham
Pikuni Community School
Browning

MID-WINTER MOONLIGHT

Looking through my window
the world seems to be
an angelic, icy place.
Starlight is reflected
from the frozen ground.
The ravines and valleys
are haunted by darkness.
Everything is still
under the moonlight.

Deanna Walker
Sun River Elementary
Sun River

When my dad is out of town
My mom is a real winner.
Instead of fixing steak or roast,
I get a tv dinner.
Some nights I eat franks and beans,
Some nights I eat the chicken.
I always like to eat them
But the fun is in the pickin'!

Zane Fulbright
Russell Elementary
Great Falls

DEAR MOM,

Hi, how is Paris?
Father got hit by a car, so now
I awake in the morning and see men
climbing along the windows.
Please explain the hunger
and the names of silver ducks
swimming along the lakeside and wondering
watching silently and wondering
what it means. Dearest Mother,
do you understand? I hope so.
What is it like in Paris? Are girls
all in beautiful dresses dancing
till morning? moonlit nights
on the Riviera? Or is it
the same there as here?
Please Mom, tell me.

Tami Buckallew
C.S. Porter Elementary
Missoula

VOLCANO

A volcano is like
a pot of beans bubbling
and spurting its juices.

Jeff Churchill
Whitehall Jr. High
Whitehall

RIVER

The river has a call for me. My body knows
how lucky I am to have permission
to come back when I'm depressed.
Warm air whistles around. Imaginary dust
fails to imitate a fat killer.
There is no grim concrete or cheap
business. Life is sensitive,
the body glamorous.

Bill Swaney
Ronan High
Ronan

THE RIGID DOMAIN

The sea is stalking
a boat trying to pass through
its rigid domain. Birds
flew up, feathers fell,
the aging angry sea
trumpeting waves high in the air.

The horizon laughed hard
at the stalking sea. Suddenly
a huge soaring wave
covered the boat and
it was not there

except for a few cottonwood crates
and a feathery shawl.

Erik Peacock
Paxson Elementary
Missoula

STRANDED

Alone with a girl on a deserted island
eighth week
all provisions gone
able to make a primitive knife and axe
but many wild and dangerous animals
we are sure we don't have long to live.

Mike Oliver
Russell Elementary
Missoula

WE WILL LIVE TOGETHER AND WILL DREAM TOGETHER

I remember the day I strolled
along to a mountain. It stands
like a person crying after his home
caught on fire. Well, his trees burned
down to ashes. I crawled on its side
and leaned against it and said,
"Don't feel bad, my home is no
more good. I lie in ashes before
I sleep, so don't feel bad. We will
live together and dream together.
My clothes torn to bits, I tremble
over cold nights, the long cold nights. So
don't feel bad, my friend, we will
live together and dream together."

Ana Ebeling
Russell Elementary
Great Falls

THE FAINT SOUND

Today we got our horse.
It was a brown-spotted
horse. We brought it to our
house and put it in a stable.
I didn't think it was strong
enough to hold him.

During the night I heard
it whinny wehehee weheheee
it went. It was a faint
sound in the silver-dotted
night. I thought it was
a ghost, but yet not.

I went to bed holding my pillow,
scared half to death, yet
I felt good we had our
horse.

Billy Chrysler
Bigfork Elementary
Bigfork

LISTENING TO BACH

deer mice
full spring
red blue green
sad glad dance
popcorn rice
rain
rain
leaves.
Cool.

Paulo Rigg
Roosevelt Elementary
Missoula

THE BIRTH OF 12 PIGS

The sow lies there
quiet as a road

Outside the night
is a black hole

I get down and try
to pull out the little pigs

The moon breaks away from the clouds
and it looks like daytime

The sow and I deliver
12 little pigs

And they are fine
And I sit there watching happily

Kelly Fisher
Deer Park Elementary
Columbia Falls

DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Three ladies marked with years
in a history book with George
George crosses the river
without losing dignity.

Three ladies marked with years
in a history book with George
the ladies having tea
without losing dignity.

Peri Kaae
Plentywood High
Plentywood

THE CHALKBOARD

The chalkboard with
its black flesh is soon
turned into a giant ice rink as
the glorious piece of white
chalk skates elegantly across it With
each and every turn and curl or swerve
new
words begin to appear

Jenny Overlease
Lowell Elementary
Missoula

I HOPE YOU UNDERSTAND

Dear Friend, please forgive me
For my foolishness
I worry about myself
Lots of times
I'm like a drunk man
Stumbling into a bar
It's like someone
Needing help desperately
I sometimes act
Like I'm dying
Because I don't have enough air to breathe
I sometimes act Why
Do people sometimes live
If their life isn't so important to them
I'm so confused Please help me soon

Sincerely,
I hope you understand

Nicole Camden
Hardin Intermediate School
Hardin

HEAT CRISIS
(after the painting: Skeletons around a Stove)

Gathering around the stove,
we never leave its heat,
for it's too cold to leave.
So we all sat and sat
until there was nothing
to sit for.

Eddy Saunders
Longfellow Elementary
Bozeman

IT HURT

In Roseland I got stung by fifty
bees and it hurt and my brother
Rory was with me they were buzzing
and my brother said come on Tim
but I just said I want to watch
the bees make their honey.

Tim Ferguson
Hawthorne Elementary
Missoula

PEACOCK IN THE ZOO

I am a peacock.
I am a very proud peacock.
I live in the zoo and
everyone sees me first
because my cage is first.
They whisper about me and say I'm
beautiful.
My feathers are green, red,
pink, light blue, purple, and
brown. Oh, I won a blue
ribbon in a beauty contest.
And I make faces at the
bear. And spread my eyes to wave
them at the female
even though she's not as pretty as
me.

Lauri Campbell
Irving Elementary
Bozeman

WHAT?

No. I'm not a kid
I'm just your size, but older
Say what?
I can't hear you
You speak so soft.
What?
I got a hole in my pants.
Well, why are you looking
at my pants?
Oh you like my short legs.
Oh.

Darin Lee
Sunburst High
Sunburst

Hey Dad, long time no here, been a long
seven years. How's the weather down there,
kinda cold here. Mom got married after your
death and he's been treating her good.
Visited grandma last summer and the old town
is getting bigger but a lot of the old people
are gone. Sorry I haven't been down to see ya
but I haven't seen any money lately. Tell ya
one thing, I haven't forgotten ya Dad.
I'll see ya when I graduate. I'll get some money
and fly down. I'll probably have a hard time
finding your grave but I'll do it, I promise.
Dad, this is it: I'll be there sometime.

Rich Fawley
Shepherd High
Shepherd

A streetlight was chewing bubblegum
while reading a potato chip.
His wife was having a nightmare
on a poached egg
the egg was cloud white
white as a daisy petal.
The flowers that grow on a mountain top
hard to get to, but worth the climb
the view is always lovely
with the sweet scents hovering in the air
one daisy petal
among the many.

Tom Judge
Helena Jr. High
Helena

SWAMP

Warm mud
with frogs and salamanders
squish squish
pond water, ducks
and catfish
splash splash
lovely swamps
in a quiet forest
the sun is warm
on the green water
so still.

Carl Hinshaw
Lewis & Clark Elementary
Missoula

THE S.S. MINNO

S.S. Minno there was
sailing the seven seas
with the wind going north, south
east and west
the waves jumping in the air.

The S.S. Minno was thrown
into the air
like a forest between
the fight
of a bobcat and a bear.

Michael Nelson
Franklin Elementary
Missoula

I remember when I was ten
we went to a restaurant
and in my salad
was a cherry tomato.
When I bit into it
she popped and hit the guy
across the aisle.

Tana Tanglen
Dawson County High
Glendive

LISTENING TO PACHELBEL

Bedtime, looking at the moon
leaves falling, pink, bluebirds singing
sad spring mice, apple jumping in leaves
walking in the moonlight
walking to the moon.
Full happy time frogs
waterfall just a breeze.

Jamie Miksch
Cold Springs Elementary
Missoula

SHOOT DOWN
(after Goya)

The men are saying
their prayers before
they are shot like rabbits.
Three men dead. Amen.
When the men
look down the barrels,
they think there is a cave.
When you go in the cave
you don't come out.

Greg Stueck
Whittier Elementary
Bozeman

THE GLASS APPLE

Father, Child,
Intertwined
In their own glass apple,
The glass apple of their family.
A family that must stick together
with a confusing world out there.
As the glass apple forms,
Encloses,
While the father, engulfed by society,
Shoots pool and drinks whiskey
The child sits alone
Inside the glass apple.
Then the father cannot get inside
Without breaking it.
A society of broken glass apples.

Robert Fisher
Bozeman Sr. High
Bozeman

THE BARN

I am in a barn sitting on a hay loft
½ mile from my house.
I am puzzled about why things are going wrong.
Is it me or is it the world?
It seems as if I am the only one alive.
I can feel the wind softly blowing in the barn.
As if my sister is with me.
But no, I am the only one there.
I can finally realize she's never
Coming back.

Misty Standing Rock
Whittier Elementary
Missoula

THE EAGLE WHO LIVED ON A POST

The eagle screamed when Dad
pulled its hair. Dad was a tiger
and Mom was a cow. Dad hooked
the eagle to a post because
he was crying and screaming
and being bad. The eagle
lived there the rest of his life.

Stephanie Maierle
Hawthorne Elementary
Bozeman

THE GATE

The gate, old and tired
we opened it and closed it
every day.
Brackets rusted
squeek when we pushed
our way through.
The white paint chipped
all over the ground.
I wish those days were not gone.

Jan Larsen
Plentywood High
Plentywood

GRANDMOTHER

I remember being scared.
Scared to laugh
because all my cousins laughed
and I didn't think it was what she wanted.

I was scared also to cry
because she would rather I was happy
as though she may be.
This was before she died.

Regg Reinholz
Dawson County High
Glendive

WHEN I'M A SEA

I don't get thirsty.
I lope over fish.
I gobble up fish.
I think they're good.
It's silly because
I never have to
take a bath like others.
I take a towel
and swoosh around
some water, and that
makes the tide come in.

Nadya Pittendrich
Whittier Elementary
Bozeman

Over the mountains
a fawn cries beyond dreams of memories.
As the wind blows cold
the endless life starts to fade.

* * *

My mouth is as dry as on a hot desert.
Memories are filled with terrors.
I heard cries of sorrow
as if my life is about to end.

May Vu Vang
Jefferson Elementary
Missoula

Go climb a tree
like a cat.
Cats like to purr
my cat purrs loud
I hate loud things
I like things that are quiet
but not too much quiet
too much quiet drives me nuts.
I like nuts
my favorite is roasted almonds
I hate cashews.

Gilly Hull
Willard Elementary
Missoula

Rhiannon with the purple sash
and shawl
walks through the deep woods
to the cottage in her mind
where there are no windows or doors
to give way to the world.

Becky Dorwart
Dawson County High
Glendive

GORDON PRAIRIE
(photographer unidentified)

The cars cross the prairie
like slow buffalo grazing
with no care in the world,
the prairie stretches to eternity
like hair waving with the wind,
the clouds roll away
like breath from a fiery dragon,
people lean back like lazy stumps,
mountains in the background
look like tiny little anthills,
the sky looks
like the color of uncovered ground
on a hill when it's snowing.

Steven Smith
Whittier Elementary
Missoula

THE MOUSE

A mouse is like
a little button on a shirt
a mouse is like a little rock
a mouse is like a little ball
on the floor.
A mouse is like a stick
in the woods.
A mouse is like a little piece
of paper.

Beau Kelly
Cold Springs Elementary
Missoula

MY BOYFRIEND

I like your boat it is as smooth as your
neck. Your neck is as lovely as Disneyland.
I love the way you jump and play and run.
And you hang glide in the most divine
way. You are as sweet as a tree.
I like your turtle. Is his name Myrtle?
Say, would you like to go jogging with
me? You might work up a hogging appetite.

Angela Owens
Emma Dickinson Elementary
Missoula

I remember when I was
about four my uncle
and I used to catch
fireflies in the fields
at night till they
no longer
glowed.

Sherri Jaeb
Helena Jr. High
Helena

FROM INSIDE THE EARTH

While the city sleeps peacefully,
I demand to understand
the short round sounds
of the nervewracking music buzzing
from inside the earth.
Sensuous people think
perturbing thoughts while
feeling energized by
fulfilling them in
an oblong farm car.

Peggy Parker
Dawson County High
Glendive

Hey lets go play
lets go play ball
come on
lets play ball
good throw.

Ryan Bowers
Willard Elementary
Missoula

INDEX OF CONTRIBUTORS

Abernathy, Jennifer, Whittier Elementary, Great Falls 5
Ameline, C.J., Longfellow Elementary, Great Falls 32
Andersen, Pam, Havre Jr. High 42
Anderson, Jim, C.S. Porter, Missoula 55
Anderson, Reuben, Mountain View Elementary, Great Falls 65
Anderson, Tim, Willson Middle School, Bozeman 69
Anthony, Denette, Mount Jumbo Elementary, East Missoula 46
Argenbright, Bret, Big Timber High School 8
Ator, Trina, Plentywood High School 54
Baker, Charlie, Bozeman Senior High School 65
Bartz, Sheila, Roosevelt Elementary, Missoula 35
Beaver, Jeannie, Mount Jumbo Elementary, East Missoula 69
Bertrand, Anthony, Morningside Elementary, Great Falls 36
Bible, Jo Ann, Ronan High School 11
Bowers, Ryan, Willard Elementary, Missoula 80
Bruised Head, Mark, Hardin Intermediate School 29
Buckallew, Tami, C.S. Porter Elementary, Missoula 81
Buls, Greg, Meadow Hill Elementary, Missoula 31
Burkhalter, Anna, Irving Elementary, Bozeman 52
Burns, Richard, Two Eagle River School, Dixon 22
Camden, Nicole, Hardin Intermediate School 74
Campbell, Lauri, Irving Elementary, Bozeman 74
Charvat, Daren, Paxson Elementary, Missoula 62
Chauna, Greg, Chief Joseph Elementary, Great Falls 9
Chief Child, Jennifer, Crow Agency Public School 66
Christensen, Jim, Deer Lodge Junior High School 56
Christensen, Mike, Big Timber Grade School 49
Chrysler, Billy, Bigfork Elementary 72
Churchill, Jeff, Whitehall Junior High School 71
Cleveland, Eric, South Elementary, Laurel 28
Collins, Steve, Deer Lodge Junior High School 43
Collaborative, Two Eagle River School, Dixon 32
Copeland, Sheila, Potomac Elementary 69
Cramer, Bruce, Longfellow Elementary, Bozeman 30
Cramm, Bret, Russell Elementary, Missoula 46
Croghan, Leigh, Bozeman Senior High School 39
Custer, Susan, Washington Elementary, Missoula 61
Dailey, Leslie, Fort Benton High School 34
Dale, David (teacher), Ronan High School 17

Danielson, Kathy, Sunburst High School. 24
D'Angelo, Frank, Plentywood Elementary 6
Datsopoulos, Dino's Classmates, Lewis & Clark Elementary, Missoula 30
Day, Susan, West Elementary, Laurel 27
Day, Terrie, Longfellow Elementary, Great Falls 33
Dearborn, Autumn, Hawthorne Elementary, Missoula 58
Decker, Katie, Fred Graff Elementary, Laurel. 45
Doheny, Jodi, C.S. Porter Elementary, Missoula 66
Dorwart, Becky, Dawson County High School, Glendive 79
Dowling, Anne, Helena Junior High School. 23
Dunn, Tammy, Belgrade High School 11
Ebeling, Ana, Russell Elementary, Great Falls. 72
Everson, Anna, Fort Benton High School 12
Fawley, Rich, Shepherd High School 75
Faylor, Van, West Junior High School, Great Falls 55
Ferguson, Tim, Hawthorne Elementary, Missoula 74
Firpo, Kathy, Bigfork High School 18
Fiscus, Julie, Emerson Elementary, Bozeman 33
Fisher, Kelly, Deer Park Elementary, Columbia Falls 73
Fisher, Robert, Bozeman Senior High School 77
Flake, Merri Lou, Seeley-Swan High School 47
Fordham, Blake, Belgrade High School 27
Fraser, Greg, Ronan High School 39
Fulbright, Zane, Russell Elementary, Great Falls 70
Gallagher, Dan, Dwyer Elementary, Anaconda 43
Garner, Rebecca, Cornelius Hedges Elementary, Kalispell. 63
Geissler, Allen, Emerson Elementary, Bozeman 8
George, Aris, Hingham High School 4
Gerke, Shawna, South Elementary, Laurel 60
Gerlach, Lori, Whittier Elementary, Bozeman. 63
Ghadder, Amina, Roosevelt Elementary, Missoula 58
Gilham, Billy Jo, Pikuni Community School, Browning 70
Glanty, Tracy, Franklin Elementary, Missoula 42
Glick, Gary, Dwyer Elementary, Anaconda. 40
Goodson, Mark, West Elementary, Laurel 44
Gordon, Mark, Bigfork High School 16
Graff, Keir, Paxson Elementary, Missoula 17
Graham, Kathy, Big Timber Grade School 58
Gray, Pete, Fred Graff Elementary, Laurel 40
Greytak, Tim, Hingham High School. 35
Griffin, Michelle, Russell Elementary, Missoula. 54

Halverson, Sheila, Plentywood Elementary 51
Hamann, Travis, Longfellow Elementary, Great Falls 21
Hammersmark, Roger, Big Timber Grade School 47
Hammond, Sheila, Bozeman Senior High School 38
Hansen, Heather, Emerson Elementary, Bozeman 35
Hansen, Imogene (teacher), Helena Junior High School 58
Hanson, Mandy, Willson Middle School, Bozeman 43
Harmon, Pat, Chester Elementary 45
Harness, Laurie, Bigfork High School 44
Harrington, Becky, Bozeman Senior High School 21
Harvey, Nikki, Whittier Elementary, Bozeman 68
Herman, Lesly, Hawthorne Elementary, Bozeman 36
Heron, Kimberly, Lowell Elementary, Missoula 40
Herz, Randy, Hawthorne Elementary, Missoula 53
Hinshaw, Carl, Lewis & Clark Elementary, Missoula 75
Hófer, Kimber, Deer Park Elementary, Columbia Falls 43
Holiday, Kim, Willson Middle School, Bozeman 26
Hoson, Kevin, Deer Lodge Junior High 10
Hull, Gilly, Willard Elementary, Missoula 78
Humberger, Eric, Willson Middle School, Bozeman 45
Hunter, Patti, Whittier Elementary, Missoula 60
Jaeb, Sherri, Helena Junior High 80
Jensen, Jeri, Plentywood Elementary 38
Johns, Dallas, Dickinson Elementary, Missoula 64
Johnson, Cameron, Morningside Elementary, Great Falls 19
Judge, Tom, Helena Junior High 75
Jurenka, Paul, Hingham High School 59
Kaae, Peri, Plentywood High School 73
Kelly, Beau, Cold Springs Elementary, Missoula 79
Kimble, Wesley, Irving Elementary, Bozeman 32
King, Keith, Power Elementary 31
Kite, Jason, Longfellow Elementary, Bozeman 24
Knoll, Dennis, Dawson County High School, Glendive 62
Knows the Gun, Lyndon, Crow Agency Public School 8
Kraft, Eric, Fred Graff Elementary, Laurel 40
Lane, Mark, Fort Benton High School 7
Larsen, Jan, Plentywood High School 77
Lathrop, Derrick, Russell Elementary, Great Falls 5
Lee, Darin, Sunburst High School 74
Lennon, Emily (teacher), Paxson Elementary, Missoula 56
Line, Chris, Lewis & Clark Elementary, Missoula 11

Lozano, Marta, Bozeman Senior High School 28
McAlpine, Tim, Power Elementary 61
McAuliffe, Colin, Lowell Elementary, Missoula 70
MacCallum, Sean, Hawthorne Elementary, Missoula 11
McCracken, Denise, Franklin Elementary, Missoula 52
McGillis, Marilyn, Two Eagle River School, Dixon 36
MacKay, Jenny, Cornelius Hedges Elementary, Kalispell 41
Machado, Paul, Potomac Elementary 51
Mad Plume, Janice, Pikuni Community School, Browning 36
Maierle, Stephanie, Hawthorne Elementary, Bozeman 77
Marchbanks, Terina, West Elementary, Laurel 59
May, Allen, Deer Park Elementary, Columbia Falls 9
Michel, Brad, West Junior High School, Great Falls 53
Miksch, Jamie, Cold Springs Elementary, Missoula 76
Miller, Al, Bozeman Senior High School 61
Miller, Brian, Potomac Elementary 56
Miller, Patti, Jefferson Elementary, Missoula 17
Mockabee, Tabitha, Cornelius Hedges Elementary, Kalispell 21
Morigeau, Curtis, Two Eagle River School, Dixon 47
Morrow, Tina, Two Eagle River School, Dixon 54
Muchmore, Derrick, Dickinson Elementary, Missoula 60
Mugford, Virginia, Chief Joseph Elementary, Great Falls 20
Murphy, Emmett, Whittier Elementary, Great Falls 55
Myers, Carolyn, Willson Middle School, Bozeman 66
Nelson, Michael, Franklin Elementary, Missoula 76
Newton, Kim, Bigfork Elementary 19
Noel, Tracy, Fred Graff Elementary, Laurel 45
Norberg, Anne, Bozeman Senior High 22
Nussbaum, Lisa, Chief Joseph Elementary, Great Falls 69
O'Conell, John, Longfellow Elementary, Bozeman 48
Oliver, Mike, Russell Elementary, Missoula 71
Overlease, Jenny, Lowell Elementary, Missoula 73
Owens, Angela, Dickinson Elementary, Missoula 80
Pardee, Tammy, Mount Jumbo Elementary, East Missoula 13
Park, Heather, Meadow Hill Elementary, Missoula 15
Parker, Peggy, Dawson County High School, Glendive 80
Peacock, Erik, Paxson Elementary, Missoula 71
Pedula, Barbara, Big Timber High School 57
Pelletier, Don, Sunburst High School 64
Peters, Theodosia, Emerson Elementary, Bozeman 60
Peterson, Eric, Morningside Elementary, Great Falls 32

Pettys, Trina, Willard Elementary, Missoula 19
Phillips, Billy, Bozeman Senior High School 53
Phillips, Chuck, Whitehall Junior High School 16
Pittendrich, Nadya, Whittier Elementary, Bozeman 78
Powell, Rich, Lewis & Clark Elementary, Missoula 54
Pratt, Leah, Washington Elementary, Missoula 13
Prill, Tony, Fred Graff Elementary, Laurel 53
Pyeatt, Elizabeth, Meadow Hill Elementary, Missoula 39
Ramage, Laura, Willson Middle School, Bozeman 49
Red Star, Chico, Crow Agency Public School 5
Reed, Cathy, Dwyer Elementary, Anaconda 21
Ridgeway, Pam, Meadow Hill Elementary, Missoula 48
Reilly, Brett, Sun River Elementary 10
Reinholz, Regg, Dawson County High School, Glendive 78
Rigg, Paulo, Roosevelt Elementary, Missoula 73
Riquette, Emily, Meadow Hill Elementary, Missoula 22
Routh, Kyle, Shepherd High School 6
Running Crane, Oral, Pikuni Community School 66
Saunders, Eddy, Longfellow Elementary, Bozeman 74
Sawyer, Shannon, Cold Springs Elementary, Missoula 57
Schemm, Joanna, Mountain View Elementary, Great Falls 26
Seccomb, Pat, Whitehall Junior High School 33
Sindelar, Julie, Shepherd High School 54
Singleterry, Merv, Dickinson Elementary, Missoula 36
Smith, Steven, Whittier Elementary, Missoula 79
Smoot, Karen, Power High School 26
Stahl, Sheila (teacher), Power High School 49
Standiford, Marcia, Chester Elementary 65
Standing Rock, Misty, Whittier Elementary, Missoula 77
Stueck, Greg, Whittier Elementary, Bozeman 76
Swaney, Bill, Ronan High School 71
Tanglen, Tana, Dawson County High School, Glendive 76
Tate, George, Dawson County High School, Glendive 41
Taylor, Donovan, Hardin Intermediate School 51
Tennancour, Vicki, Seeley-Swan High School 51
Todd, Perry, Big Timber High School 20
Tureck, Sean, Dawson County High School, Glendive 66, 68
Tveldt, Van, Plentywood Elementary 52
Vu Vang, May, Jefferson Elementary, Missoula 78
Waddell, Gina, Fred Graff Elementary, Laurel 55
Wagner, Mary, Bigfork Elementary 62

Walker, Arthur, Sun River Elementary 68
Walker, Deanna, Sun River Elementary 70
Wilson, Joel, Hawthorne Elementary, Bozeman 64
Withington, Jim, Belgrade High School 18
Wodarz, Margie, Chester Elementary 61
Wojciechowski, Wendy, Washington Elementary, Missoula 46
Wood, Bill, Seeley-Swan High School 59
Wood, Tiffany, Havre Junior High School 48
Woody, Matt, Mountain View Elementary, Great Falls 64
Yellow Robe, Michelle, Havre Junior High School 29
Yong, Pao Gé, Jefferson Elementary, Missoula 31

PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

Anaconda
- Dwyer Elementary

Belgrade High School
Big Timber
- Big Timber Grade School
- Big Timber High School

Bigfork
- Bigfork Elementary
- Bigfork High School

Bozeman
- Bozeman Senior High School
- Emerson Elementary
- Hawthorne Elementary
- Irving Elementary
- Longfellow Elementary
- Whittier Elementary
- Willson Middle School

Browning: Pikuni Community School
Chester Elementary School
Columbia Falls: Deer Park Elementary
Crow Agency Public School
Deer Lodge
- Granville Stuart Elementary
- Deer Lodge Junior High School

Dixon: Two Eagle River School
East Missoula: Mt. Jumbo Elementary
Fort Benton Elementary
Glendive: Dawson County High School
Great Falls
- Chief Joseph Elementary
- Longfellow Elementary
- Morningside Elementary
- Mountain View Elementary
- Russell Elementary
- West Junior High School
- Whittier Elementary

Hardin Intermediate School
Havre Junior High School
Hingham High School
Kalispell: Cornelius Hedges Elementary
Laurel
- Fred Graff Elementary
- South Elementary
- West Elementary

Missoula
- C.S. Porter Elementary
- Central Elementary
- Cold Springs Elementary
- Dickinson Elementary
- Franklin Elementary
- Hawthorne Elementary
- Jefferson Elementary
- Lewis and Clark Elementary
- Lowell Elementary
- Meadow Hill Elementary
- Paxson Elementary
- Roosevelt Elementary
- Russell Elementary
- Washington Elementary
- Whittier Elementary
- Willard Elementary

Plentywood
- Plentywood Elementary
- Plentywood High School

Potomac Elementary School
Power
- Power Elementary
- Power High School

Ronan High School
Seeley-Swan High School
Shepherd High School
Sunburst Public School
Sun River Elementary
Whitehall Junior High School

Looking Back

LOOKING BACK,

on the first ten years of the Poets & Writers in Schools program, I realize that the strength of the program is in the writers who have served Montana's schools. Thus, in celebrating our anniversary, we could find nothing more appropriate than, as Greg Lenihan so aptly put it, a "reunion by mail."

In our efforts, begun last winter, to track down the 38 writers who have served the program during these ten years, we were *unsuccessful* in finding the whereabouts of D. Clinton, Charles Hall, Ken McCullough and David Slabaugh. Located but not heard from by press time are Daniel Lusk, Doylestown PA, and Craig Sterry, Brookings OR, (said to be building a cabin at Bend OR).

We hope that the program, which has increased ten-fold the numbers of students and schools touched in the ten years, has had an equally beneficial effect on the lives of these writers.

And, while the program could not exist without the writers, the kids, the teachers and administrators, we also owe a debt of gratitude to the National Endowment for the Arts, the Montana Arts Council members and staff and the advisory panel for their indispensable contributions to the strength and quality of what we do.

Patricia K. Simmons
Artists in Schools Coordinator
MONTANA ARTS COUNCIL

This retrospective is affectionately dedicated to Richard Hugo. His excitements and kindnesses have touched many lives, kids and writers alike. We are all glad he is on this earth.

ANTHOLOGY TITLES

1970-71 – *The Cool Coughins,* Madeline Defrees, editor.
1971-72 – *Wind is Blowing,* John Holbrook, editor.
1972-73 – *Waking up from the Light,* Michele Birch, editor.
1973-74 – none published.
1974-75 – *I am an Unknown Greatness,* David Long, editor.
1975-76 – *I Feel like Touching Something That's Not There,* David Long, editor.
1976-77 – *The Earth is Tingling at my Feet,* David Long, editor.
1977-78 – *Ode is My Dog,* Lee Bassett, editor.
1978-79 – *Erasing Your Face,* Chris Jacox, editor.
1979-80 – *The Stream Invents a Smile,* Lee Bassett, editor.

I may have delayed too long to be in time for the Poetry-in-the-Schools anthology, but I'll give it a try anyway. After the week in Italy and a weekend at Maharishi International University in Fairfield, I went immediately to Worcester, Mass., came back to Amherst in time for a thesis oral. I've needed a little time to unwind.

I leave Amherst about June 14, should hit Missoula a few days later.

SONG FOR THE SNOW SHOVEL

Why does everyone hate
the new town crier of the white
plume? Suppose my shoulder blade a pedestal.
Shovel, a bottle rack found in the drift. Shaking
the burden from trees, digging a muffled
neighborhood for the bare

concrete: what absurd lives wait
to be discovered at the fringe.

I skim the paws
of animals let loose in first light, trail the kids
zigzagging from school. Chip the reckless
tread of cars hunched over the buried
curb. Indoors, the scrunch of my blade undoes
the love knot, returns the dreamer to the ravelled
sleeve. No other watch but a hound
shut out by a sleepwalker.

Outside, it is not cozy.
Berlin Wall down the middle of the street. Great
Wall of China bounding my yard. Ice
clamps down, incisive, over the eaves. In air
too still for chimes, a yellow-tailed bird
flares toward the mountain ash. Orange berries
nest in shivered leaves. Chinese bells of a dog collar
bringing kisses to my feet.

Later, the city will
send its elaborate weight down the block. The town's
great will be out lifting the hulk of day on striped
shoulders. Reading their news by the window
thaws my hands on a mug, a purple finch
entrenched in the heart of plum, both of us
spinning our wheels.

Madeline DeFrees

CHRIS JACOX

Chris Jacox lives in Four Lakes, Washington, and teaches at Eastern Washington University and Spokane Falls Community College. She is completing the M.F.A. program at Eastern Washington. New poems have appeared in *Willow Springs,* and will appear in *Southern Poetry Review.*

NIGHT WALK AT THIRTY

In February, when the land is still
half-locked in winter, the geese silent
and a few leaves hang like bats from the trees,
then I walk down the old road to know
the night once more: wheel-ruts choked with ice,
and a clear breeze light around me, and my face
a steady mirror to the stars.

Then I can find
Orion, the only one I could ever name
and I am on a ferry crossing the Great
South Bay, curled in my father's arms, the wind
dancing spume in our faces while he nears
each star with a palm, and names those
he knows well.
Down the old road I dip
into farmlands where nothing is sure, not even
this grinning moon, nothing except the great
outlines of space and fields, the bright rustle
of grass, the glint of mica.
The road straightens
and I am on an airstrip sliced out
of the luminous prairie called Otter Creek
and I am dancing through blue and red lights
for the pure joy of breathing.
On nights
like this, an old sorrow leaps at the bone,
sorrow for places lived in or loved well - - -
I have never left that bowl of earth near
Flathead Lake, cupped among the roar
of pine trees, a sky of diamonds at dusk
and all the universe at home; I lay on earth
I would never name, my eyes fixed on the long
approach of midnight, the immutable stars.
And now
there is nothing to return to that has not been
made holy; this wind, these stars, will sanctify
this world, to the horizon, for all my ages.

Chris Jacox

SANDRA ALCOSSER

Presently doing poetry residencies with state arts councils in Montana, New York and Iowa. Working for an MFA at the University of Montana. I will edit *CUTBANK* Magazine next year with Ralph Beer.

Formerly an editor with *MADEMOISELLE* Magazine. Also directed Poets-in-the-Park, Central Park and initiated a similar program for Glacier National Park. Received Dylan Thomas Poetry Award while studying with Daniel Halpern at the New School.

Work published in a number of magazines including *PARIS REVIEW, PORTLAND REVIEW, MADEMOISELLE, MONTANA POETS ANTHOLOGY, POETS ON PHOTOGRAPHY, SING HEAVENLY MUSE.*

CLIMBING THE SAPPHIRES

I've climbed too high again
into the Sapphires, following

the track of white tail, looking
for where the boughs arch, the cup
of red needles, a place to crouch
and watch the valley.

I've climbed until the footrocks split.
And you, higher up
on the other side of the same fin,
tell me I can walk perpendicular.

But this rotten bloodstone and pressed fern
is breaking in my fingers. I pull my joints
like venetian cord. I climb with a cat
that hung a hundred feet over our cabin
last winter. Wedged between two limbs,
it cried for days, then fell,
solid ice, onto our roof.

Everytime I climb too high I sweat and beat
the mountain. But you are there to talk me down.
I swing out, shift my weight, let your voice
believe me. I am graceful on this earth.

Sandra Alcosser

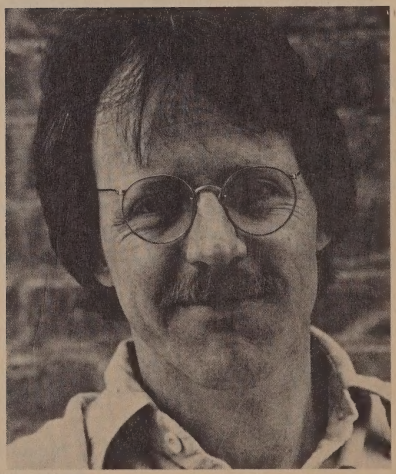
JANE BAILEY

I've been madly freelancing in the graphic design business, my first few months of that, and its been quite hectic. You also caught me as I was about to leave for Nancy Steele's wedding. The wedding was beautiful and the visit (5 days) resulted in my deciding to move to San Francisco. I plan to continue freelance graphics there, where I'll also be able to get some work in book design.

Cheers,

Jane Bailey

DAVID LONG



I live in tropical Kalispell, Montana, with my wife, Susy, ace medical librarian, and 4-year-old son, Montana. I divide my work time between teaching creative writing and neurasthenics at Flathead Valley Community College, and writing short stories which have been called "haunting" and "unmarketable." My first book of poems, *EARLY RETURNS,* is due "sometime early 1979." Recent accomplishments: a hollering part in Michael Cimino's epic western, *HEAVEN'S GATE:* a three-run homer in the seventh against Moose's Saloon.

OLD WIVES & HUSBANDS GATHER AT THE HOT SPRINGS

Saratoga, Wyoming

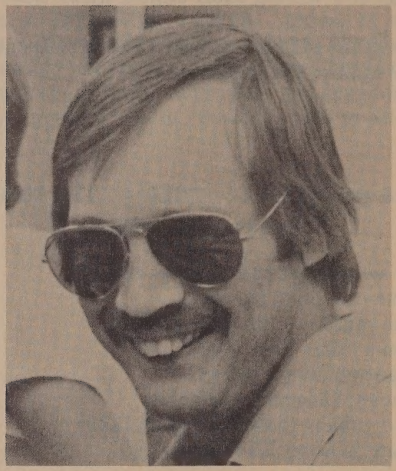
In sun all day we pushed ourselves for this:
a ring of quartz-rich sand, harmless
shreds of algae, water hot enough to soak
the anger from a bone. They look
like some forgotten congregation,
perched on mossy benches, embracing
lonely braids of steam. Same black suits, skin
as slack & white as hope. They let us join.

It could be prayer the way we watch the spring.
No telling where it comes from, only
that the bedrock's flawed, like everything.
Uphill they dug a newer pool. Chlorine.
Kids with oily tans. A turquoise slide.
The life guard's radio spreads high school football
like a rash. We're down here, my wife & I,
companions hushed among the faithful.

This one takes me for a friend. Do I know
his wife has gone? I'm sorry, no. He nods.
He taps a finger to his smoky chest,
whispers: It's a goddamn egg in there. Best
forget those plans. He wades out christened
by the failing sun, stops alone to listen
to the empty-handed sky. The water
holds him up. In a moment we go after.

David Long

RALPH BURNS



Ralph Burns lives somewhere in Bloomington, Indiana. We're fairly sure he's doing something. It might be work with prisoners or it might be poet-in-the-schools there. At any rate, he is slowly losing both his status as a southern poet and his hair.

VIOL

When horses are nosing the cold on grass
say pearls cluster on their damp backs
and toadstools mildew under a sleeve of moon,
a velvet ear. But it is morning and green
and horses are nosing the cold on grass.

The maker of viols turns his other ear
to rosewood, to rhythms that move there,

dreams of spruce, where the violin sleeps.
But it is morning and green curds glisten
on mushrooms and ponies are nosing the cold grass.

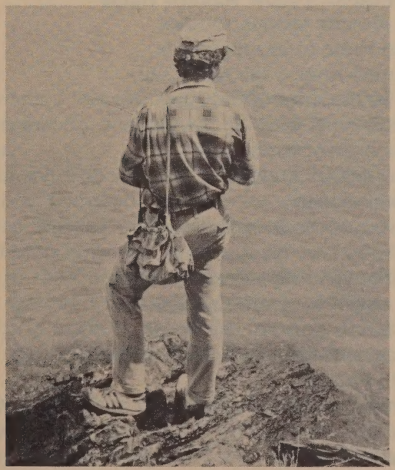
Say the viol is a bell of water, an hourglass,
the body of a woman, the pear inside,
and it hangs there, in the motion of things.

Say the viol shapes a blue sound
of words freezing, surrounds fog
riding low on lips of horses, that it is summer
and spotted ponies are nosing ground from grass.
Their pink tongues curl like scrolls.

The violin lacquers velvet in the moon
but it is morning and spotted horses turn.

Ralph Burns

RICK ROBBINS

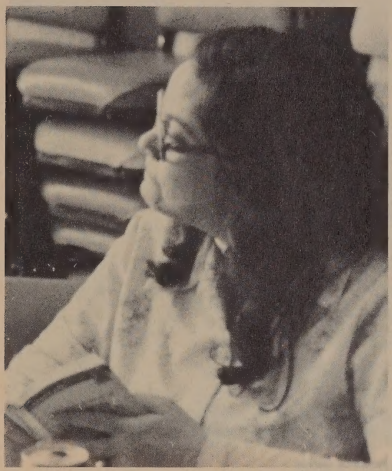


I'm currently working on a chapbook manuscript titled *The Invisible Wedding.* Also putting together a double issue of *Cafeteria,* which I continue to co-edit. When not reading or writing or on the road for PITS, I'm most probably in the garden husbanding our 600 square feet of worms and hope. I'm on bread duty every other weekend.

FROM OUR CORNER TO THE NEXT, PAINT ME ORANGE

Ready enough for the green scattering
on our lawn. Ready to walk out into
colorless air as if it mattered
our sky was kidnapped
three weeks ago Tuesday, as if that kind
of blueness mattered. I step into myself
past the messages of purple iris,
the wind in my off-white fist
going slack. Were I to die in time
for the next yard, fold my name up
with my clothes and stack both on this curb,
yellow would agree: yellow window frame
that tempers gloomy visions, modest
yellow shroud these roses sang inside
all winter. I must forgive the red in me.
These cracks in the sidewalk whisper
their directions, but I keep on. I walk
straight as the brown worm crawls
from finger to dirt. If I take on
the color of kidnapped
sky at sundown, it's because the world
stops then. Crows turn blacker then, our wind
quits. Under the yield sign, I lean
into my best angle. It's from that slant
I accept this hour's ransom, throw off
my orange flag, and walk back home to you
inside a quiet rainbow
I'm ready, finally, to leave behind.

Rick Robbins



Since leaving Montana PITS,

I taught in Browning for 2 years. I was the English Department and ESAA Project Director at the Pikuni Community School. I spent the summer of 1978 in Missoula teaching English for Upward Bound. I then returned to Tulsa.

I taught for three months in the Tulsa Public Schools in what I would term the "ghetto" high school. When I quit that position, I worked part time for the Arts and Humanities Council of Tulsa as a Poet in the Schools. I also worked in the Philbrook Museum Junior Gallery Program as an Instructor in Native American Poetry.

Last June, I became a Poet in the Community for the Arts Council. This was a CETA position. I taught a variety of workshops around Tulsa, concentrating on senior citizen workshops. When that position was abruptly ended by a cutback in CETA funding, I was hired by the Tulsa Housing Authority as activity leader in the senior citizen high rises. Last summer and fall, I also taught part time at Tulsa Junior College.

In December, I became managing editor for *Nimrod Magazine.* I also wrote a grant and coordinated the First Annual Oklahoma Poets' Retreat Weekend with William Stafford, which took place in March of this year. It was a wonderful weekend. I met, at last, William Pitt Root there.

I am expecting Calliopea Press in Missoula to publish my first book, *AN ALPHABET OF SALT*. I was a runner-up in the Tulsa City County Library Creative Writing Contest.

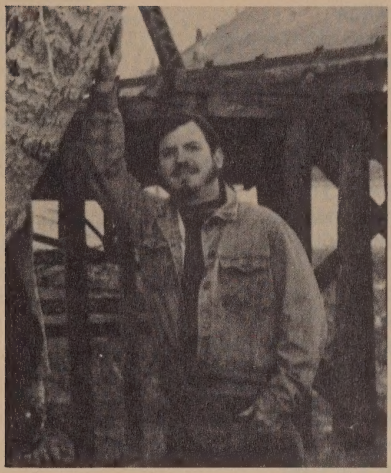
And finally, I am engaged to be married next November. My fiancee, James L. Roper, took the photograph I am sending.

ONION

I was planted as the earth sent out warm odors,
a tiny seed, yearning toward the sun.
The other seeds, unborn inside me,
directed green leaves into flowering.
My roots sucked color from the earth,
shaped a form out of light.
I grew purple and fat with magic
to feed the mother of those seeds.

"How long has the onion waited for harvest?" you ask.
I have waited since the mothering earth itself was a seed,
sleeping in the huge dreamer's eye.

Ann Weisman



I'm managing to keep busy house painting, learning the remodeling trade, writing, picking up a few publications now and then. My wife and I are proud of our children's scholastic achievements and tickled over their progress in their competitive swimming efforts. We're also actively involved in a recently formed neighborhood association - - working with several families towards our mutual well being - - socially, economically, spiritually. Hard times are coming, we're getting ready for it.

STARTING WITH WHAT I HAVE AT HOME

I love the trust, the open intimacy
my son finds so easily with things - -
last month the Maytag washer,
broken down, the motor frozen,
in a day dismantled by us both
across the lawn. He loves his tools,

the ways they extend for him his touch.
A favorite is the wrench, his speciality
the hammer. Pliers, of course,
for the long unravelling
of electric copper wire. Best, though,
the magnets deep in the motor core
bound to make the whole thing tick.

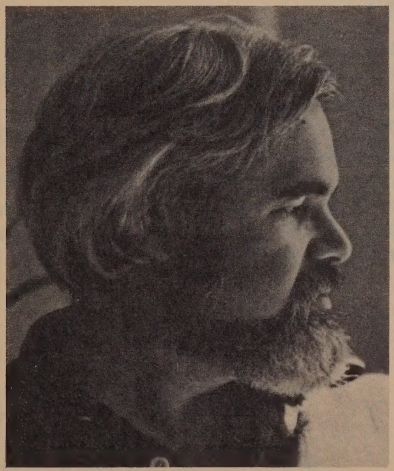
A year away from first grade now
words are hard for him, not quite things
to tinker with on paper yet.
In our bathroom over the sink
the words "Hot" and "Cold" are taped,
over the soapdish "Soap." I know
he knows these words and more
but I listened to sound advice
and helped naming things with words
everywhere I could. Yet throughout
our house the tools I've come to love
fail. I cannot speak of what is near,
intimate, all too horribly real.
A few words I want and trust
to fill the volumn of this room
that I might say the heart is safe,
that poets care to fill with poems
words they trust tell truth:
that life is hard, most times
seldom fair, and being human
is to endure such harms all suffer
in pain or in fear of lack of love.

- - She failed a week ago, troubled,
lovely sister of a mutual friend,
at jumping off the bridge. Trembling,
two frightened men could not let her slip.
But hurt drove deep and impulse struck
last night, when in tool shed
with her father's saw, she cut away
for good her hands, sure this final act
would leave no one, ever,
with anything left to let her down.

I know this work I do, this naming
things with words is poor
and lets me down. It's cruel
the heart is never safe. I see now
real grief strikes the weakest
hardest first. Try as I might
such compelling losses I know
can never be undone. But I've learned,
watching, following my footstep son,
- - a certain trust, fair, human,
a feeling words are sometimes
all we're left we go on living - -
there, profuse, brutal in its horror,
here, hopefully some one thing
more than compassion, care, hard truth
scratched on paper in search of heart.

John Holbrook

GEORGE PERREAULT



George Perreault is teaching and writing in Easton PA, having completed his Ph.D. last year at the University of New Mexico. He worked in the PITS program in New Mexico and Montana, has published a good bit and was nominated for the Pushcart Prize in Poetry in 1978 and 1979.

TEN YEARS

(for Jeanne)

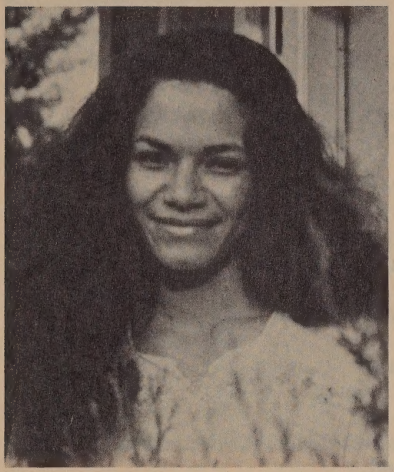
The other night during Phil's story:
the startled duck flopping along the ditch
just out of reach in wounded mime
away from her fuzzy-headed young
and the hope that if
he didn't have to turn off
she would die of exhaustion
in time for his supper

I thought about the old Jemez
catching wild horses on the mesas
chasing them all day
allowing no food, rest
until at twilight –
horses' sides and flanks
like wet drums –
the men could walk up
and head them home
breathing heavily together
in the dark.

I thought of these ten years
you have insisted on loving me.

George Perreault

ROBERTA HILL



So much has happened to me since I was in Montana, it is hard to know what to mention. I worked for three years at Sinte Gleska College in Rosebud, South Dakota, where my son, Jacob, was born. I returned home to Oneida, Wisconsin in 1978 and spent almost a full year on a National Endowment Grant completing my first book of poems, *STAR QUILT*. It is being considered for publication at a few places. Most importantly, I married Ernest Whiteman this last February. He is Arapaho from Wind River, a fine artist and the father of two sweet girls, Heather and Melissa. My life has undergone such a transformation in only a year or two. It is in looking back that I see so much happiness suddenly spring more and more into my art and life. This fall we will be living in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, where I will be teaching Composition and Native American Literature for the University there.

MADE OF MIST

I stumbled on each step as I went down
to hear the water, rumbling on my left,
to see the rocks, creating a shelf
with each bright layer streaked in red and brown.

Isolated in a big black rubber coat,
I heard the wind, but could
the wind hear me, sitting aft
and singing as the boat

dropped from dock and churned on churning waves?
Warm sun and mist rolled over every face.
Lovers locked their elbows and changed place.
I walked along the rail. The engine slaved

along the falls, ferns hiding a lair
where a snake lay twisted into stone.
Tomorrow, even this, a darkened wound.
A thousand gulls charmed that frantic air

and I have never felt that kind of love.
Lost in wing beat,
in heavy spray, wanting to meet
their frail lament, I moved

to the front where motion bound with praise
was the whole world,
and I have yet to stop being swirled
through the dark and light of coming days.

Roberta Hill

SAM HAMILL

Sam Hamill has recently published *PENUMBRA,* a chapbook from Uintah Press. Another new book, *ANIMAE* has been accepted by The Carnegie-Mellon University Press. Aside from running the best small press in the Northwest (with Tree Swenson), he keeps busy with the classical guitar and a deep study of the Spanish language.

AN OLD MAN IN THE PARK

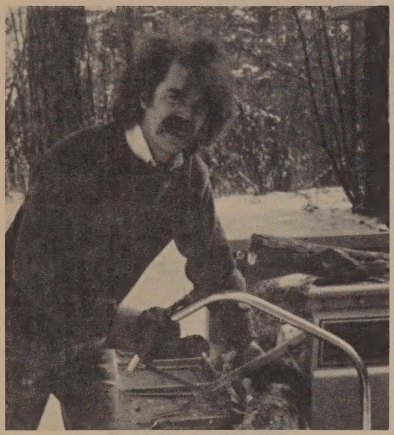
I sat down here on the lawn
in the sunshine to let
the breeze play with my clothes
like the alabaster fingers
of a skittery girl I half
remember from more years ago
than I can distinctly recall.
She, too, was a kind
of sunshine in the middle
of years and years of rain.
She rode a buckskin pony
and loved to ride and sing.

I was fourteen then, when
I first met her, was drunken,
silly, pretending to be lame.
Once, sprawled on the bank
of Cottonwood Creek, I think,
we shared a pint of bourbon
and got sick, then swam
a mile upstream, or so
it seemed, into a little thicket
warm and lush and green.
I woke alone in the dusk
to the sound of her pony's hoofs
cantering through the trees.

It's sunlight does that,
returns us into the past
but somehow changed, makes us
see ourselves as someone else,
a strange chance creature
peeking among the leaves,
at once perceiver
and perceived. The wind
that blew me westward
stlll blows west
against the solid sea. I speak
from the ends of the day.
Across high bluffs, the grasses
slowly bend as if to climb
into the sky. Cool wind,
warm sun, and I want
to close my eyes. It
is spring and giddy. I want
to praise the years
but cannot sing. I want
to praise the weather and the world
before I'm gone, praise
even a half remembered girl
I thought I loved, although
I cannot remember her name.

Sam Hamill

TOM REA



Tom Rea and his wife Barbara moved from Missoula to Story, Wyoming last June, where they started Dooryard Press, to print letterpress editions of poetry. Their first book, *The Mapmaker's Lost Daughter,* by Lee Bassett, was published this Spring. Last November, they had a daughter, Hannah, whose latest trick is the raspberry.

HIGH PLAINS, WYOMING

You could name a town after it, this clarity:
Yucca leaf on sandstone
a kiss from eighty yards.
Sun eats rock. What grows
keeps a long time at it.

Once two Frenchmen
might have made it this far
but probably not. A.D. 1742, they were
looking for the River of the West.
They had no idea, they lost
the astrolabe two days out. Louis
and Francois Verendrye, thirsty.
The river flowed only on the map.

But there was a time
you could float to the ocean in a month,
just drift, no portages, no falls.
Wind that never had a sand grain in it
lined your arms and you knew
it was the right direction. You could smell
by the banks, their peculiar mud.

Tom Rea
from MAN IN A ROWBOAT
Copper Canyon Press, 1977

MICHELE BIRCH

Poet-in-Residence with Montana Poetry in the Schools from 1972-1975. Moved to Iowa City in August, 1975 where I have been working at the University of Iowa Hospital full-time to part-time while attending graduate school part-time to full-time. Expect to be in Iowa City for several more years.

FOOTNOTE ON THE LIFE OF GUILHELM de la TOR, TROUBADOUR

His biography tells us that when his wife died
he went mad and after trying all sorts of devices
to resuscitate her, finally died himself of despair

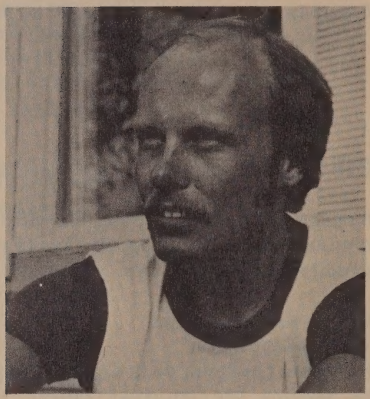
If we believe this history we must realize
that it is night. Only the silent moon
with her glass eye looks on. Guilhelm de la Tor has hung
his wife by the heels. See how her nightgown, fallen
over her head and her hair, unbound and longer than the gown
swing as she swings. The reach of love, he wrote, measures
valor and worth. What if, so at one with your lady
she suddenly dies? Should you languish forever? Kill yourself?
Hardly any singing lover was ever so consumed with grief.

Think of him in a dream, all night, remembering
how he sent her, face down and sideways over his strongest horse,
through the woods, the low branches striking her legs
and chest, into fields, the mist rising. Nothing
but her fixed stare. Realize we have not learned her name.
N'Azalais of Vizlaina. Bringing someone back it is always night.
Na Cunizza, also called Agnesta, in this manuscript hardly known,
I am looking for the story that has not been told.
Hill of Bone. Scarred Cliff. From the infinite blue
of his idea, out of the freezing darkness of your silent tomb,

I claim you as I claim my own.

Michele Birch

GREG LENIHAN



Greg Lenihan is the nom de plume of a trapeze artist who gave up a lucrative circus career for acrophobia. He teaches English at Hellgate High School in Missoula. His craziness is a closely guarded secret, shared primarily with his ninth grade students, who accept his escape from the adult world with genuine sympathy. In ten years he'll be bald. He jealously guards his weaknesses and feeds them whatever he can afford. When he dies, he wants to be buried with his basketball.

INSIDE AND OUT

You have to write your way
out of here. All the jailors
know it, and they're writing,
too. When you're not used to
being alone, you forget
you can always talk to yourself.
As long as you don't start up
some insane question-answer routine,
it's alright, you won't be committed.
Dedicated, maybe, to the one you love
if you prefer it that way,
or to the smooth flow of words,
if you like it like that.

You hear a lot of folks say,
"I don't know, and I don't care."
Not many say, "I care and still
don't know." I'm neither of these.
I'm the guy who's taking
it all down in case it gets me
closer to the heartbeat I know
is out there, and the singing
that goes with that rhythm.
Sometimes I'm in tune
with something that lets me forget
these walls are real
or would crumble if the right
words were spoken. You're
on the outside if you're reading
this. We on the inside only write.

Greg Lenihan

NANCY SCHOENBERGER

Coming to New York from Montana last year was my most difficult move - - and this is from a veteran traveler. I could have changed planets and adjusted more easily. From Montana's mountains, rivers, and spaces, to New York's famous crowds and problems. But it's been good for me: I'm involved in more projects and exposed to different kinds of writing and approaches to writing. Next year I'll co-edit *Columbia: a Magazine of Poetry and Prose,* continue with Columbia's MFA program, and work part-time at *Antaeus.* One of the highlights of this year has been working on the transcript of a presentation given by Jorge Luis Borges at Low Library. (The year's low point was getting mugged in my elevator.)

QUIET AND GETTING QUIETER

Start in a farmer's field, his daughter gone
forever this time, snow dusting
the corn stalks, the abandoned Chieftain,
coyote fur on the cattleguard. He hears
what's not there, and the usual noises.

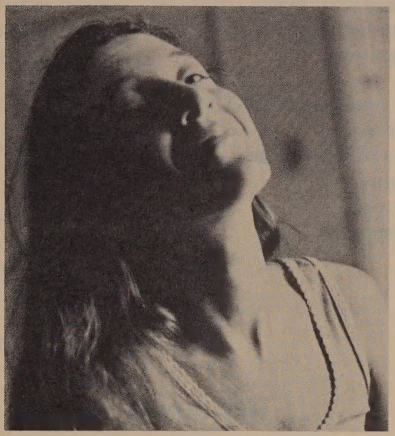
Go under water. The world grabs the diver
and breathes for him. He hears
heartbeat, he hears the current
dragging her sad chain.

Consider the puffin, gorgeous
in spring snow
In the attic of childish desires
puffin is king - - sentimental, avuncular.

Now the farmer returns to his birches,
their leaves like tiny smiles.
A woman hitched to a dogsled,
long legged, bleeding, slips through
the white woods.

Nancy Schoenberger

NANCY STEELE



Here is a rather nice picture of my throat, about to swallow, giggle, gag . . . to do something. The photo's telling. It's another transitional interim for me, a time of being almost but not quite. I'm about to get married (June), about to hear about a teaching job I've been hoping for (next week) and about to start another writing project (siempre manana).

THE MARKED KITES OVER SANTA TERESA

They are strategic, this paper
armada floating above the slums,
a ploy to baffle the police
who comb rows of squalid shacks
for petty thieves - - the heroes
of the ragged outskirts.

Young boys dress at dawn to whispers,
instructions, brandished knives.
Blue, green - - whatever color is agreed
they must chant it as they climb,
patrolling the rocky paths, pretending
to be absorbed in kites.

An eight year old can wind up
with his toes shot off for not
detecting the approach of boots
or failing to coerce the wind
to fly the warning signal.

They lurch above the highest roofs,
newspaper, bits of rag,
flaunting the pride of the favela.
When the raid begins
a wanted man has only
to keep one eye skyward.

Nancy Steele

ART HOMER

Art Homer was born in the southern Missouri hills, grew up in California wine country and western Oregon, and now lives in Missoula. After working several years as an ironworker, he completed his formal education at Portland State University and the University of Montana Graduate Writing Program. He has poems published in various literary magazines and anthologies. The best of these are about his loved ones, rain, and poverty.

FOR MY DAUGHTER

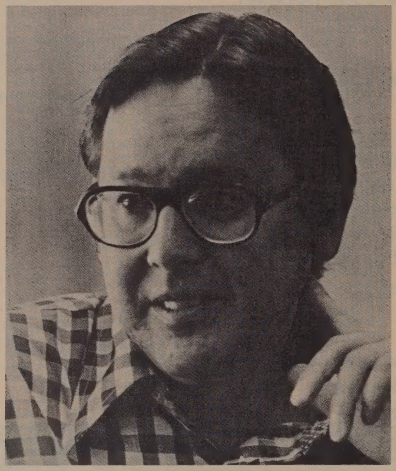
There is rain in the sky, Willow,
also clouds and blue stuff we call . . .
just sky. No other name for
blue above and no other name
for willow. Ah my little
tabula rasa, I'm afraid
what to write.

Let's steal
some old word and make it
sweet again because
you never heard it.

I say orange.
You, injury. Me,
soliloquy. We are
about to be lonely.

I mean lovely. Sure.
We can wipe the sky clean too.
You can tell me again
how the moon gets
inside the clouds.
"It blooms in!"
No other word for it
Bloom.

Art Homer
Published in WHERE WE ARE: THE MONTANA POETS ANTHOLOGY



Since leaving PITS, Jim Welch has published two novels; *WINTER IN THE BLOOD* and *THE DEATH OF JIM LONEY*, as well as a book of poems, *RIDING THE EARTHBOY 40*. It is impossible to find anyone who does not respect his writing.

SNOW COUNTRY WEAVERS

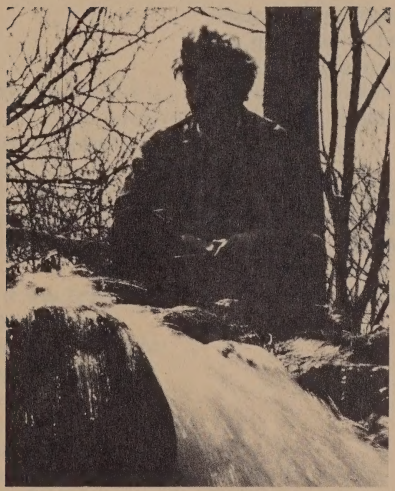
A time to tell you things are well.
Birds flew south a year ago.
One returned, a blue-wing teal
wild with news of his mother's love.

Mention me to friends. Say
wolves are dying at my door,
the winter drives them from their meat.
Say this: say in my mind

I saw your spiders weaving threads
to bandage up the day. And more,
those webs were filled with words
that tumbled meaning into wind.

James Welch

LEE BASSETT



Lee Bassett worked in Poets-in-the-Schools for three years. During that tenure, he managed to write three books, mostly in teacher's lounges throughout the state. They are: *The Mapmaker's Lost Daughter,* Dooryard Press; *Hatsutaiken,* Copper Canyon Press; and *Gauguin And Food,* Calliopea Press. He is currently working in a bookstore and reading the complete works of R.H. Blyth, again.

SUNFISH

When the crow in the oak was quiet
and we were young, my father took
us fishing on Sundays. We've come
here today, he'd say, to honor a fish.
Not just any old fish, but sunfish.

He'd sit at the end of a dock, bobbing
up and down with wind, untangling our
lines. Like worms in the can, we knew
nothing. We did not know a war
still roamed in his head.

Then something grabbed and fought
for the whole pond. Down deep, past
our screams, we were scared. Father
held spines in his hand and made us
touch them. He pointed at the blood-dot
behind the ear.

Then it began to rain. We walked home
through the woods. We know nothing
about our father today, his secrets
are in the cave of his jacket. Without
a word he wrapped it around us.

Lee Bassett

As to what I'm doing, I'm in Vermont as you can see by the return address. Brilliant. I'm sports editor on a small weekly newspaper. Here in Vermont, like Montana, they have no notion of Blacks and women. I am the sportswriter and my photographer is a tremendous, very Black, blackman with a white wife and the unfortunate name of Jim. I freelance baseball articles. I suppose I should start to lift weights also.

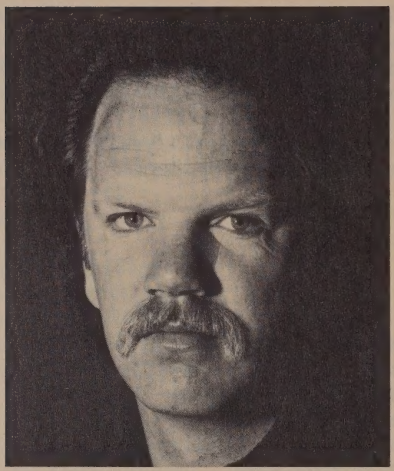
I'm back to writing fiction and also working on a long series of poems about the island I spent my summers on as a child. "Teacher" is part of that series.

TEACHER

In blue jeans, tee-shirt and navy-blue
blazer, Mr. Charlie Ames sat, boots
on the desk, drawling geography or math
to his class of twenty-three. Spring
always took him by surprise especially
the sweet cool days of April when
(we imagined) he sipped whiskey in the art closet
before reading us
his poems. He said it was true - -
he was moved by the progress
of fine legged women whose thighs
he sometimes wished
to press open under
the new green elms. Recess
made him dizzy. And so
he kept Rhonda LaBombard in saying
she was interested in foreign
language though french
was his only other tongue. And I,
along with every other girl, had imagined
it was me at the chalkboard
he lightly brushed against.

Linda Kittell

PATRICK TODD



For the past three years I've been director of The Poverello Center in Missoula. Poverello offers a free meal, clothes store, food bank, counselling and referral and soon, overnight housing to the poor and transient. My first book, *Fire In the Bushes,* came out in 1977, followed by, *The Iron Walrus.* Presently, I live in Missoula with my wife and two children.

POEM FOR FAR OFF CRIES IN THE PORTLAND ZOO

After two weeks rain
today sun and sky open wide
over the Portland Zoo
All the animals out . . . black bears sit up for peanuts
in cartoon pose Locked inside the deadly
boredom of his stall the giant

Kodiak spreads out like soup
Even the bengal tiger
paces thirty feet of cement
without a single tree or blade of grass
Somehow tho the day is saved by a hippo
Looking out over the grass and mud . . . you think there's no one
in this small field Or maybe a big animal died
Suddeny you catch the grey
flick of her tail
and legs thicks as palm stumps
Obnoxious with dead weight of boulders
her enormous hind end
fills the entrance to her cave

* * *

Strange how the monkies'
world changes
when they're shipped to the states
Once riding stringy vines thru palms
or sailing thru the air
like squirrels
Here they climb and sit inside damp stone buildings
The lonely flourescent light inside is the same in swimming
pool locker rooms
And just as wise as anyone
watching . . . the ridiculous
orangatang . . . carrot red arm and back hair
hanging all the way to the floor . . . chooses
to show his rectum to the crowd
Upside down Head between his feet
He rolls his eyes like a child in the straw
Then quick as any dog or fox he and his little pregnant wife
scurry to a corner and hide
their sweet affection
under the playground bars

* * *

Is it Rebecca's trick
on Issac brings wrong sacrifice

and abuse of animals
thru the ages?
Or more the drive of hairy Esau handed down
from some unknown Mongolian tribe?
Whatever the reason I thank God for the exaggerated arrogance
of these tough old dusty camels
See how they strut
or stand forever in profile
Or simply turn away from everything
that is not them

No wonder the giraffe
. . . behind the same iron fence . . .
is so mysterious
Even when we feed her rye crisp from the machine
she looks at us like we are glass
Here the mirror is reversed
and suddenly the animal looks at us
from the other side of the fence
Strange look away wolves . . .
Twenty penguins in a row are endless people without hands
Not just Portland We go away from every zoo
not having learned a thing
So the extreme wildness we long
to feel breaks inside the crazed and terrible
cry of the far off peacock

Patrick Todd
(Reprinted by permission; has appeared in SOJOURNERS magazine and THE IRON WALRUS.)

SARA VOGAN

Knopf will be publishing my novel, *In Shelly's Leg,* next spring and Harper & Row will be doing my short stories, *Scenes from the Homefront,* in August, 1981. I suppose you should mention that I was the first fiction writer for the Montana PITS program and that I've received NEA and Stegner Fellowships.

PHOTOGRAPHS FOR MY MOTHER

My mother, like myself, has spent most of her life in steel towns. In steel towns the sky never gets truly dark; the orange glow of the furnaces keeps one part of the horizon lit all night long. The light blocks out the stars and I can remember failing a fourth grade astronomy test because I believed stars were kept in planitariums like animals were kept in a zoo. In steel towns tiny motes of black ash rain even on the sunniest days. The ash leaves speckles of grime on the window sashes, on dishes left in the dish drainer, between your pillow and your bedsheet.

Since my mother will never see Montana I am going to send her these pictures, pictures I have stored in my memory, a private part of my mind's eye. Perhaps the colors will be brighter, the sounds more clear, than they are in real life but I don't think this will matter to my mother. My mother, a woman who has spent her whole life in large, industrial cities, once mistook a common farm goose for a pheasant. She truly believes New Jersey is the Garden State although she has never seen the Pine Barrens or anything south of the freeway into New York.

This is what I would show her: On summer evenings when the light lasts until almost ten o'clock she can sit in the still-warm sun of a softball bleacher and realize that over the shoulder of the center fielder, out past the green-going-brown grass of the field, she can look down the Bitterroot Range and see snow on the tops of the mountains. It is possible that in the sky at the edge of the diamond she could see a red tailed hawk, circling, his wings still as his body floats in the wind currents.

In the fall my mother would expect the trees to turn as they do in the East. But in Montana only the city trees turn colors. The maples and poplars planted along sidewalks burst into yellows and reds as the temperature drops. On the mountainsides only the tamarack pines go gold. The firs and ponderosa pine stay a deep green under the snows that cover them.

Winter nights with three inches of snow on the ground she could sit in a steaming hot spring, letting the minerals and natural hot water soak and massage her body. Through the window she can watch white tailed jack rabbits, their ears twitching as they dance through the snow.

In spring people ski in T-shirts and shorts. Folks fly fish on the ice-laced edges of swollen, snow-melted streams. Some April nights the rain turns to snow. The wind makes the new leaves whistle.

My mother can probably not imagine Ringling, Montana, a failed wintering ground for that famous circus. She can't imagine a railroad line built especially for stock cars to haul lions and elephants that died from the cold. It would frighten her to see midgets and fat ladies in flannel shirts at the local store ordering Red Man chewing tobacco and bottles of Coca Cola. She would rather they spent all their waking hours in the ring. She can only accept them when they perform.

She could imagine the bars though, the working class bars with perfume machines in the ladies rooms selling squirts of Taboo or My Sin for a quarter. Bars where any drink mixed with water in called a 'ditch', as in irrigation ditch. She would sit with schoolteachers, realtors, heavy equipment men, the hairdressers and secretaries who drink hard liquor and look out the one window at the snow falling through the light in the parking lot. She would not believe the cold, twenty below with a Hellgate wind blowing or the fact that everyone carries jumper cables, even in summer. I doubt she could understand cowboys or smokejumpers or the Forest Service types who fly heavy-bellied slurry planes over crowning forest fires and drop pink fire retardant from the skies.

My mother would enjoy Glacier Park and could rate it in her mind against Niagara Falls and the Grand Canyon. She would take snapshots of the Weeping Wall, the riot of blooming wildflowers sweeping up the slope. She would keep her eyes open for grizzlies and find the sound of the hikers bear bells quite exotic. She might see a deer, maybe the first in her life. She would be impressed by Going To The Sun Highway and admire the stone work while making some pertinent comment about social programs during the Depression. If it were fall and salmon were spawning in Lake McDonald, hundreds of eagles gorging on the dying fish flesh, she might wonder why she has never seen this before in New York or Pennsylvania or Alabama. My mother has never seen a Steller Jay, the big ones with the black crest. She has never smelled the pitch of

a yellow pine.

To my mother, bread comes wrapped in plastic. I don't think she has ever been close enough to touch a cow and might believe beef is born on styrofoam trays. The cattle that graze on the eastern Montana grasslands are as decorative as the buffalo in the National Bison Range. Wood is bought in a store, as furniture, not husbanded by the Forest Service, clear cut to seedling.

My mother's world is composed of movie theaters and television ads, crowded supermarkets and Muzak-filled department stores. A good view is a hillside where she can overlook the city, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Birmingham. My mother is alone only when she is deep in sleep.

My mother would be lonely out here. The sky is too big for her. She can not imagine a highway with no other cars, a night when you can hear crickets chirping, or the idea of going to town for supplies. The white crosses marking the roadsides would puzzle her; she can't envision a one car accident. She can't imagine a ghost town, only a subdivision. Indians at powwows and cowboys at rodeos are events that happen on TV. I'm sure she would wonder what we do out here.

If I were to give these pictures to my mother in some way it would be a lie. This isn't a true picture of Montana, only scenes I wish my mother could have known. But then, perhaps I am just a dream of hers, just as this Montana is a dream of mine.

Sara Vogan

WILLIAM PITT ROOT

Update, since 1975, includes periods as writer-in-residence at Wichita State, Univ. of Southwestern Louisiana, Univ. of Montana, and Interlochen Arts Academy, plus PITS work in Oregon and Wyoming, Idaho and Mississippi. Spent 1978-79 as United States/United Kingdom Bicentennial Exchange Artist in England, primarily Cornwall. Recent publications include *A JOURNEY SOUTH, 7 MENDOCINO SONGS,* and *COOT AND OTHER CHARACTERS;* forthcoming in 1980-81 are *FIRECLOCK, THE ANONYMOUS WELCOME,* and *WHEEL TURNING ON THE HUB OF THE SUN.* I was invited by Ladybird Johnson to represent PITS and to read from my work at the celebration of the 10th anniversary of NEA at the LBJ Library, which I did.

TEACHING AMONG THE CHILDREN OF CHIEF PLENTY COUPS

Late October and in this country
the dry gold of the leaves
falls like old ornaments.
A Christmas that hasn't come
feels done with. Branches
reach into the air like roots,

and whatever blossoms
blossoms underground. Here
most faces are flat as the earth
and colors of the earth and when their speech
erupts with Crow earth fills the air
as words the stomach somehow hears.

Speak, and you will be heard.
But question one of these
expecting what you would expect
of stone, or an old stump,
the wide blank gaze, neither
friendly nor hostile,
of a flat rock, or bark
with eyes. It is not
a gaze that isolates
a tree from its forest
or mistakes
words from the tongue
for the heart's talk.

What you want to know here
you must learn here
from that single book
whose quick words burn
on pages shed like leaves
in gusts of sunlight. And remember
that no leaf is the tree,
no tree the land; nor would
the land itself explain the curved
blue shield of the sky, the wheel
of the seasons turning, returning,
or the people who move freely still
among them all, alert
to the one wind moving
antelope and elk, eagle and owl
among their brothers
in the ritual of hunger, the hunters.

William Pitt Root

BILL O'DALY

Bill O'Daly has published a chapbook, *The Whale in the Web,* with Copper Canyon Press. Since then, he has travelled to Italy, written a brilliant thesis on the much neglected poet Alan Stephens, and edited the snappiest magazine in the Northwest, *Willow Springs.*

THE WHALE IN THE WEB

Early sun grazes
the green crystal hills.
Below the fathoms of fog burn off
in the narrow valley
winding one rivulet to the sea.

From my sleeping bag
I crawl past the woodstove
and the house you built creaks
like the ribcage
of a landlocked whale.
Still drunk with sleep

I pee off the high porch–
one yellow ribbon unfurls
down this *tierra de sangre*, blood red,
with tufts of grass, thistle, madrone,
and the ranks of conifers
guarding the dry spring.

A small herd of cows
start their climb; empty,
they wobble upstream towards their turn
on the south-sloping pasture.
On land we call *ours*
my woman reads and rubs her back
against a thick double fir
whose branches last night, raucous with birds,
cradled the white intruder moon.

At the first whiff of bear
the deer skipped out
thru the dark doors of the forest.
Dogs drove a porcupine higher up
the hills. Sand Creek lost its way,
paused and scanned the bent path
of the moon, stopped,
waited for the dawn.

I let go my breath
and the whole house quivers
in the wet web of the land,
land that belongs to us,
that belongs to no one.
And the arteries of water,
the dance of our dead,
the tiny lungs of the living,
the pulse of the sea, spoken or unspoken,
billow its unbreakable threads.

Bill O'Daly

ANDY GROSSBARDT

Andy Grossbardt taught at Northeast Missouri State and received a Ph.D. from the University of Utah. During a research fellowship in 1978, he travelled and published widely. He died in the summer of 1979.

THE DISTANCE BETWEEN

With the storm this close
each crack of thunder is someone
breaking picture windows with a board.
Every few seconds another crash
shakes the house to its foundation.

In the yard, Mrs. Adcock gathers in
her wash, splotched gray from the first
heavy drops of rain, and nods
her kerchiefed head and mumbles.

We huddle inside, children again
waiting for the hurricane
churning toward the coast.

Upstate, twenty cows and one small boy
will not get up from the open field
soaked with rain. The counselor
must keep the others from seeing.

He stands sobbing, ankle-deep in mud
and holds his useless high school jacket,
an offering to the pungent air.
Careful not to touch the skin
turning faintly blue, the cropped hair,
he bends to cover the body
and tries hard not to gag.

What we know now, he knows better all these years.
We aren't children anymore; still
with the air humming closer than ever
I hold you tight and whisper hold on, hold on.

Andrew Grossbardt

ED HARKNESS

After spending a year traveling the enormous and haunted state of Montana, 1973-74, teaching poetry in towns with magic names like Wolf Point, Flaxville, Plentywood, Three Forks, Crow Agency, Paradise, Froid, Frenchtown, Antelope, Heron, Medicine Lake and Glendive, oh Glendive, on the road to which I encountered a freak spring blizzard at night that made me wish I'd studied dentistry like my mother urged - - after that, my life becomes somewhat less interesting. I continued to work in PITS, doing two years for the schools in Yakima, followed by three more years of free-lance work in the schools and communities in Idaho, Oregon, Washington and again Montana. Six years of what I feel was good work devoted to children and their real selves. Having recently moved back to the neighborhood where I grew up in the north end of Seattle, I now teach a creative writing workshop to night students at North Seattle Community College. I continue to write poems, an occassional book review, and find myself longing to return to my early love: playwriting. Linda and I have two sons, Devin (5) and Ned (1).

KAYLYN, HERMISTON ELEMENTARY

The Umatilla spills color back to clouds.
Curlews glide like scarves above
the lavish Methodist church. Across
the river, cattle graze, the world ends.
Bitterbrush. Larkspur. This is where
the wild flowers.

That meadowlark trills long ribbons
on the fence post I can't see.
They drift this far. I quit thinking
I am the dust my car raises, crawl
through the teeth of the wire.

Thanks for the plastic ring, Kaylyn.
Your dress is absurd, a rag. Your eyes
are sharp stones from Tennessee,
have seen some dark unnamable.
I imagine your mother gaunt,
your father harsh with vicegrips
in his greasy fist, hunting you,
beating a rusty fender in the ravine.

This is not the way it is, only
the way it is when I say. You would know - -
your need to sketch me handsomer
than I am while the teacher speaks
of annual rainfall in Peru.

You slam the red ball against the bricks
after school. It rings all the way
to here in my chest, my own lurking
backward Tennessee of pretending.
The school secretary whispers a secret:
Don't be charmed - - she steals. Tells me
you live with an aunt who feeds you
but seldom washes your hair.
I hunted you here, wanted to hear you
for a minute of your sunset.

What am I talking about? About how
you are that meadowlark I feel.
Your song opens a beautiful wound
in my afternoon, thirty two.

My neck is knotted. I haven't moved
in three hours, I haven't breathed.
I haven't moved in my flimsy muttering life.
The day begins to die for real,
igniting the riffles. On the other shore
a gray horse looks at me, lifts over
the willows and breaks into seven swallows
etching sharp loops for food. Where
the current stalls against a log, trout
begin to rise to stars. That meadowlark trills
lovely as your name.

Ed Harkness

LIZ LIBBEY

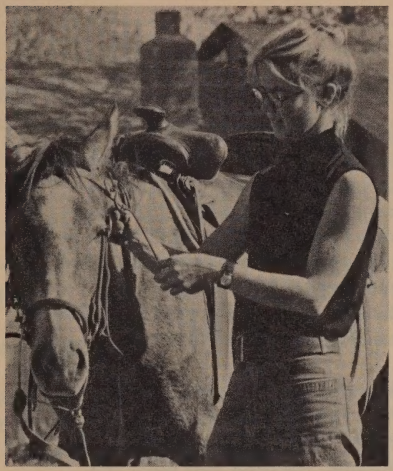
Liz went to teach at a branch of the University of Illinois in Chicago when she left Montana in 1976. For the past two years she has been teaching as writer in residence at the University of Kentucky, at Lexington.

DA VINCI'S FLYING MACHINE

for Richard Hugo

Before you know, the landscape is gone
and you watch yourself spin
away over water, thinking sea light that transforms you
is proper light for a pain worth remembering,
a pain that saves you. Long back,
who pulled you slippery from the sea?
Fish newly in flight in your jaws
are a wonderful face
you want to return to. The waves
slow for you in that special light
you dream of, dream you live new,
breaking the horizon.

Liz Libbey
(reprinted by permission of the author
from "The Crowd Inside.")



Besides working for the Artists-in-Schools programs of Montana and South Dakota, I'm involved in editing *THE SHAFT,* the newsletter of the Black Hills Energy Coalition, which is working to make uranium mining in South Dakota acceptably safe. I live and work on a cattle ranch in western South Dakota, which is also the home of my press, named after a horse thief, another example of the independent businessman.

Recent publications:

Fiction and articles: *MOTHER EARTH NEWS, RODEO SPORTS NEWS, BLOODROOT, FOOL-KILLER, DAKOTA ARTS QUARTERLY, SMALL PRESS REVIEW, PLAINSWOMAN, AMERICAN POETRY REVIEW, HYPERION GREAT RIVER REVIEW, MS. MAGAZINE, SELECT PRESS REVIEW, COLORADO QUARTERLY, WIND.*

Poetry: *NORTH COUNTRY ANVIL, BONSAI, SOUTH DAKOTA REVIEW, COUNTRY WOMAN, BLOODROOT, MIDWEST PEOPLES' CULTURE. PIIRTO PRESS (poemcard).*

A CHANGE IN WEATHER: Midwest Women Poets, Rhiannon Press.

SPIRIT THAT MOVES US anthology, *SHELLY'S, HIGH/COO, MIDWEST QUARTERLY, COUNTRY WOMEN.*

Editor and publisher, Lame Johnny Press. Woman of Achievement, SD Press Women, 1979 Nominated for *WHO'S WHO OF AMERICAN WOMEN.*

WALKING FENCE

makes spring official,
shouldering a little roll of smooth wire,
fencing pliers in my back pocket,
leather gloves, staples in my jacket.
Cows have been here, looking for holes
in the fence, sliding in gumbo, mud
squeezing up between their toes.
The spring is running now - - all that
rain. Maybe the dam'll fill up.
Cowslips
blooming already, roses on the ledge.
Water has seeped out, two hands full
cupped in the grass, sweet and clear
and cold. Another half mile. Old
John must have set this post - -
pure pitch, driven in with a maul.
Still solid; needs a staple.
Now
the hill; won't be any problem there
unless the bulls've been fighting.
Tie this spot down with a rock
and I can head home, get those calves
turned in here before noon.
Good to know
the fence is up; that's one
job finished.

Linda M. Hasselstrom
(Accepted by SCRATCHGRAVEL HILLS)

Karen Swenson has worked in the Idaho, Colorado and Montana programs this year, as well as directing the Aspen Writers Conference. Headquartered in Brooklyn, she occasionally receives and answers mail.

THE EGG WOMAN

In an onion of sweaters
laminated by nothings of holes
she leans on the gate hung
with cardboard tatters of signs - -
95¢ a dozen, Beware Vicious Dog, Honk.

She complains the sonic booms
crack her goose eggs
her mouth a zero unnumbered by teeth
under a hat crammed to her eyebrows.

Her eggs are a shelled selection of hues - -
brown, bandaid pink, white and blue.
I buy blue, a robin spring purchase:
aughts of noughts, a cipher of circles.

Clouds layer above her wind scoured house.
I drive into hills seeded by snow
watching in my rear view mirror
the arthritic gait canted like a crab
of the woman who deals in eggs in old age.

Karen Swenson

ANN SPANEL

Living & teaching in New York City. 7th & 11th grades. Spent last summer in the Cummington Community of the Arts & worked on their admissions committee this year. Taught creative writing at Cathedral School & a poetry course at Univ. of PA in Philadelphia last year. Have had slews of odd jobs - - - stagehand, nursery school teacher, science writer typist, dance therapist. Did poetry residencies this year in Macon Co., NC and in Whitehall. Published in several little magazines. Readings on WBAI & Macon Co. radio, Jones Library series in Amherst, MA, Bennington College & around NYC. Lived in West Berlin one year, translated German poets. Have monthly "salons" at my apartment, where painters, writers & musicians present work & perform.

PAINTING THE OPEN SKY IN FIRST GRADE

Blue slash trembling with
blue blood from the paint jar
tempera gelling on the page - -
what they called art was this
desire for blue
this floodway in the neck
where sky poured through.

Ann Spanel

PARTICIPATING WRITERS 1970 - 1980

1970-71
Madeline DeFrees - Page 92
Michele Birch - Page 114
Patrick Todd - Page 126
James Welch - Page 122

1971-72
John Holbrook - Page 105
Michele Birch
Patrick Todd
Madeline DeFrees
David Slabaugh

1972-73
Michele Birch
John Holbrook
Patrick Todd
Charles Hall
Ken McCullough
Edward Harkness - Page 137
David Long - Page 98

1973-74
(incomplete records)
David Long
Michele Birch
Edward Harkness
Roberta Hill - Page 109
Andy Grossbardt - Page 136

1974-75
David Long
Ann Weisman - Page 103
John Holbrook
Edward Harkness
Michele Birch
William Pitt Root - Page 132
D. Clinton
Ken McCullough
Jane Bailey - Page 98
Craig Sterry
Greg Lenihan - Page 116

1975-76
Jane Bailey
John Holbrook
Elizabeth Libbey - Page 140
David Long
Ann Weisman

1976-77
Jane Bailey
Ralph Burns - Page 100
Edward Harkness
Linda Kittell - Page 125
David Long
Daniel Lusk
Nancy Steele - Page 119

1977-78
Sandra Alcosser - Page 96
Lee Bassett - Page 123
Ed Harkness
David Long
George Perreault - Page 107
Tom Rea - Page 113
William Pitt Root
Craig Sterry

1978-79
Lee Bassett
Chris Jacox - Page 94
David Long
Bill O'Daly - Page 134
Tom Rea
Karen Swenson - Page 143
Nancy Schoenberger - Page 117
Sara Vogan - Page 129

1979-80
Lee Bassett
Art Homer
Rick Robbins - Page 101
Sam Hamill - Page 111
Ann Spanel - Page 144
Linda Hasselstrom - Page 141
Karen Swenson
David Long
Sandra Alcosser

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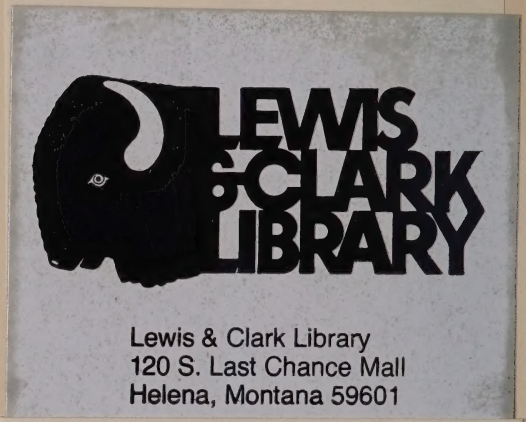

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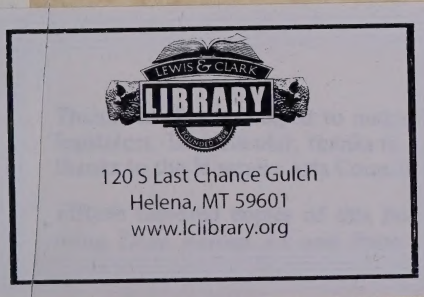

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